

[Print](#)**Cellphone company launches African recycling program**

Nokia offers consumers a way to dispose of old mobile phones and accessories

By: Michael Malakata

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LUSAKA, ZAMBIA – In an attempt to meet fears that cast-off mobile phones are posing an increasing toxic risk in the developing world, Nokia has launched a recycling initiative in East Africa that offers consumers a structured way to dispose of old mobile phones and accessories.

Consumers can drop off old mobile phones, including handsets from other manufacturers, at designated Nokia centers in the region. The devices will be sent to recyclers in Europe for processing.

Nokia customer care manager for East Africa, Nicholas Maina, said this week that the initiative would enhance safe disposal of gadgets.

The East Africa region includes Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Somalia and Tanzania. No money will be given to people as an incentive to return the old phones, and Nokia is only providing an infrastructure to ensure that disposal is properly done.

The initiative by Nokia comes at a time when many countries in Africa are becoming more concerned about lack of proper handling of electronic waste.

"It is the manufacturer's responsibility to provide easy access to collection points and strengthen end-user awareness about the responsibility; we are rolling out these take-back campaigns in established Nokia offices in Africa," said Dorothy Ooko, communications manager for East, Central and Southern Africa, via e-mail Thursday.

The initiative, said Ooko, is backed by all key mobile-phone vendors including LG, Matsushita-Panasonic, Motorola, Phillips, Samsung and Siemens.

Improperly discarded electronics can create hazardous wastes from such materials as flame retardants used in plastics and circuit boards; solder containing lead and tin in cathode-ray tubes; beryllium alloy in connectors; and mercury.

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