

Understanding Solid Waste Management in Face of Political Instability: Actors, Roles, and Challenges to Sustainable Development in Kinshasa

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Abstract : Local municipality responsible for solid waste management (SWM) in many developing countries is facing real challenge. This is even more critical in the country facing political instability. Few decades ago, it has emerged new urban governance including partnerships and involvement of formal and informal actors for an effective and sustainable solid waste management. This paper identifies SWM actors and analyzes their roles to sustainable development in Kinshasa. An attempt has been to examine the challenges facing the actors in managing effectively waste in the city. The study is based on the empirical data gathered in the years 2009 and 2014 in Kinshasa using expert interviews, observation and documentation. The findings indicate that solid waste in the city is poorly managed, activities not coordinated and fragmented, as consequence severe public health and environmental problems. Five group actors are involved in SWM in the city including government, private business, NGOs/CBOs/donors, household, scavengers, in which, scavengers are more visible in collection and recycling activities. The results suggest that recognition of informal collectors and recyclers (scavengers) and strengthening alliances among all SWM stakeholders can lead to greater effective SWM in the city. The key lessons learned include lack of city's SWM culture over SWM, unwillingness to pay and lack of environmental consciences are the main obstructions to sustainable SWM, therefore there is a need for social capital approach to empower individual and group actors as to create capabilities for an sustainable SWM.

Keywords : challenges, institutions, political instability, scavengers, solid waste management, sustainable development

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