Greetings!

How ecorated facilities are managing plastic waste

Sustainable tourism is essential for the tourism industry’s long-term viability. However, plastic waste is one of the key environmental issues that we must deal with if we want to achieve this. Lodges and camps are making every effort in reducing their environmental impacts including plastic waste generation. In this way, they are promoting sustainability in their operations. They have adopted different measures towards this, all of which are geared towards the same goal! Some of the measures are very innovative and we would like to highlight them, to enhance knowledge on ways to deal with the plastic problem.

**Eco-bricks made from plastic waste**

An eco-brick is a plastic bottle packed with plastic to set a density enough to create a re-usable building block. Making eco-bricks is not about encouraging the production of plastic, it is just a means of reusing the plastic that is already in the environment so it does not end up in dumpsites and in the ocean. At Angama Mara, the staff have formed a habit; that rather than throwing away plastic waste, they simply stiff them into disposable plastic bottles to make eco-bricks. The management at the lodge has provided an incentive for this—that for every 50 bricks a staff makes, he or she receives Kshs 2500. As part of the eco-rating audit of the property in April 2019, we were able to see how innovatively they have turned plastic waste into an important resource (see the illustration below of a structure made from eco-bricks).
Pesa for Plastic Initiative

Plastic waste are generated in many areas including at the communities. As part of their corporate social responsibility and commitment to sound environmental management, Atua Enkop has partnered with Hot Air Safaris to ensure effective waste management at the local community in Talek. This is by paying locals Kshs.1 for every plastic bottle collected. The picture below depicts plastic bottles at the premises of Tipilikwani Mara Camp, which is one of their properties.
Direct use of plastic bottles in constructing a fence

Currently many organisations or facilities are grappling with the challenge of how to manage the plastic bottles they generate especially from water packaging. It is no secret that plastic does not biodegrade easily, and most of it such as bottles is used only once before being discarded away. This leads to pollution of surface and ground water resources. This therefore calls for action from all of us; to try and reduce or repurpose the plastic waste we generate. Ecorated facilities have taken innovation a notch higher with regard to repurposing plastic. One example is Sands at Nomad in Diani that have used plastic bottles to design a fence within the facility (see illustration below of collection and assembling of bottles at the facility).
In a world quickly suffocating beneath a blanket of plastic products, urgent action is required to save our planet. Each one of us can try and manage the plastic waste generated in a sustainable way. We have to be innovative and raise our ambition because this fight is not yet lost!