

Unit 12

Sustainable Economies



Closing the Circle

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Each year, we extract billions of tons of minerals, ores, fossil fuels and biomass from the Earth. And each year, about two-thirds of this material is wasted. Plastic rubbish is dumped in rivers and oceans, while a third of all food ends up in the bin. The time has come to turn this linear economy into a circular one, by adopting a series of strategies to eliminate waste. The European Union is investing billions in this plan, based both on short-term and long-term goals. Copenhagen, for example, is already using the latest technology to convert 534,600 tons of waste a year into energy to electrify 30,000 homes and heat 72,000, while the Netherlands has pledged to go fully circular by 2050.

DID YOU KNOW? The principles of circular economy can be applied to all sectors, including the ever-expanding one of electronics. Currently, only about a fifth of all **electronic waste** is recycled, but copper – a vital material used for smartphones, computers and other devices – could, in theory, be recycled indefinitely without loss of quality.

Glossary

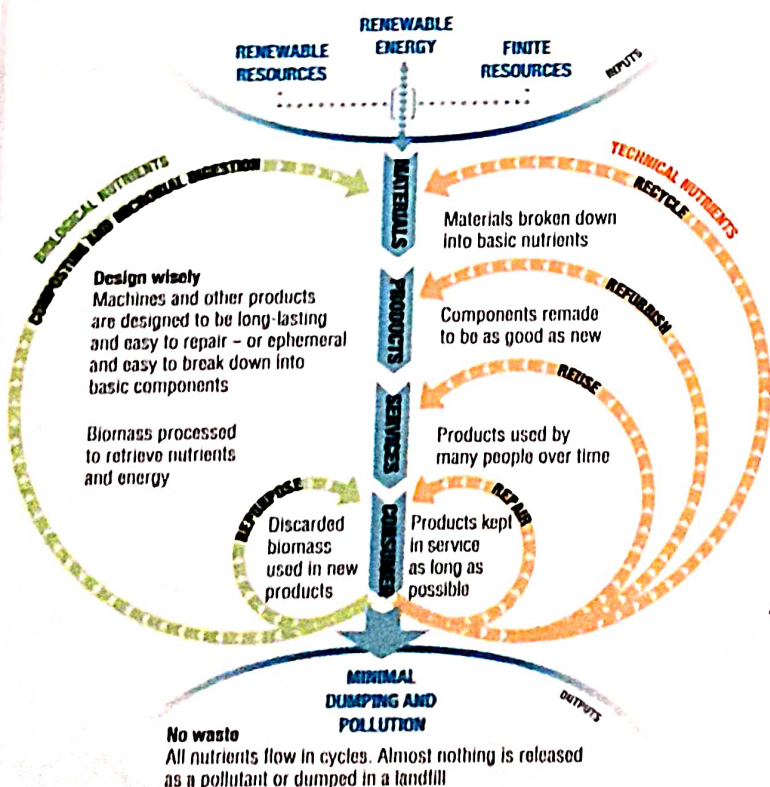
ores: minerali grezzi
dumped: scaricata
has pledged: ha promesso
composting and microbial

digestion: compostaggio e digestione microbica
landfill: discarica
copper: rame

Use less

Renewable energy replaces fossil fuels; rental or sharing businesses serve more people with fewer products

CIRCULAR ECONOMY



1 WARM-UP Can you guess what a 'circular economy' is and what its purpose is?

2 VOCABULARY Look at the chart 'Circular Economy' and find verbs that mean:

- 1 *rimettere a nuovo:*
- 2 *riciclare:*
- 3 *riutilizzare:*
- 4 *riparare:*
- 5 *riconvertire:*

3 SPEAKING Answer the questions.

- 1 What is the difference between a circular economy and a linear economy?
- 2 How would consumer products in a circular economy differ from the kind of consumer products we have in the present linear economy?
- 3 How would a circular economy be different in terms of energy consumption?
- 4 What makes copper such an important and interesting material?

4 DEBATE Get together in groups and discuss what you can do at home and/or at school to promote a circular economy. Focus on one of these three areas: electronics, clothing or food.