

Minimising waste is everyone's responsibility - WasteCon2012

WasteCon2012, Southern Africa's largest and most comprehensive waste management conference has successfully opened at the East London International Convention Centre to a just over 500 delegates and 100 exhibitors. It is hoped that ideas, knowledge and expertise will be shared on all levels of society to effectively and efficiently minimise the growing waste situation in South Africa. Wrestling with waste is not something that can be done in isolation.



WasteCon2012 is the flagship bi-ennial waste management conference in South Africa, spearheaded by the Institute of Waste Management of Southern Africa (IWMSA).

"As the country's landfills are dangerously nearing capacity, waste treatment alternatives need to be investigated and we have to instil a culture of reduce, reuse and recycle, with disposal to landfills being the absolute last resort," said Obed Baloyi, WasteCon2012 programme manager from the Department of Environmental Affairs.

Service delivery is below standard

"We are all faced with the challenge of wrestling with waste in our respective fields and sectors. Together we can work together and put our minds and expertise together to find a solution to diminish the challenges of waste," said Steve Kalule, chairman of WasteCon2012.

Councillor Melitafa from the Amatole District and Khanyisa Gazi, acting head of department of the provincial Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEDEAT) both concurred with the sentiment that all need to work together and take responsibility to find solutions when it comes to managing and minimising waste.

"The sad reality is that delivery by municipalities are unfortunately below the desired standard to deal with the waste generated, the legal compliance is low and insufficient budget allocation for effective waste management," Melitafa added. "Government cannot do it alone - we need to call on all stakeholders within the waste management sector in government, the private sector and general public to work together towards a waste minimisation solution. We cannot buy another planet; our lives and future generations all depend on this planet."

Education at grass roots level

Gazi reiterated that a green economy and job creation - especially within the recycling industry - will be encouraged by the DEDEAT going forward.

Deidre Nxumalo-Freeman, president of the IWMSA said education about waste management needs to be done at grass root levels. "Everyone needs to play their part in a clean and green environment. For this reason the exhibition area is open to the general public; we are encouraging everyone to visit WasteCon2012 and to become part of a sustainable waste management solution that is not just a once-off, but that can be a part of life every day. People can only take action if they are armed with the right information."

For more information on WasteCon2012, go to www.wastecon.co.za.

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