

Summit engages with Joburg's new waste management strategy

The Joburg Waste Summit 2013, held at the Sandton Convention Centre on 15 and 16 May 2013, aims to provide opportunities for the city to engage the waste industry and other stakeholders on its new waste management strategy. The summit revealed that some solutions to certain South African social and environmental challenges may be closer to home than previously thought.



Mayor Tau

Working with waste

Johannesburg, like the rest of South Africa, faces the challenges of unemployment, poverty, inequality and an increasingly limited space to dispose of its waste. These challenges could however arguably be met by better managing the city's waste.

Delivering a keynote address, City of Johannesburg Executive Mayor Mpho Tau challenged the roughly 400 delegates representing various organisations in the recycling and renewable sector to find an appropriate word for what is presently called waste. This, he said, is necessary because of the increasing value that 'waste' is contributing to the economy.

Delegates included representatives from community organisations, and from the glass, plastic, paper, packaging, and polystyrene industries.

Delegates compared best practices for waste management from other parts of the world. For example, it was found that in some developing countries, the poorest citizens are using waste management to improve the standard of their lives while contributing to keeping their cities clean.

Waste not, want not

Drawing from experiences in Africa, Asia, South America and Europe, United Nations Environmental Programme representative Cecilia Kinuthia-Njenga shocked delegates by pointing out that 9.4 million tons of food, or a third of the food

produced in the world, ends up on landfill sites without it ever being eaten.

The amount of food wasted and where it ends up struck a chord with the Johannesburg mayor. According to Mayor Tau, about a fourth of Johannesburg's 4,4-million population goes to bed hungry at least three times a year while food ends up on landfill sites.

Responding to the startling numbers, Mayor Tau said Johannesburg is fast running out of landfill sites and might have to export its waste to neighbouring cities or provinces. This, however, would come with cost implications for Johannesburg citizens because the waste would have to be loaded on vehicles to be disposed of elsewhere.

For more information on the Waste Summit go to www.pikitup.co.za.

For further resident queries, contact Joburg Connect on +27 (0)11 375 5555 or 0860 502874 (0860 JOBURG), or go to www.pikitup.co.za.

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