

Celebrate the 'seventh resource' this Global Recycling Day

Recycling is a vital part of the circular economy. It provides material input back into our market and minimises the amount of waste that goes to landfill. With this twofold benefit, recycled material has quickly earned the title of the world's 'seventh resource' beside water, air, oil, natural gas, coal and minerals.



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“Only 7.5% of households in our country recycle their waste,” says Leon Grobbelaar, President of the Institute of Waste Management of Southern Africa (IWMSA). “We need to change this statistic if we want to relieve the pressure on our landfill sites and reap the economic benefits of recycling.”

Global Recycling Day takes place every year on 18 March and seeks to recognise the people, countries and technology that play an important role in recycling. These are the heroes for an environmentally stable planet and a greener economy. Each year the ‘seventh resource’ saves over 700 million tonnes in CO2 emissions and this is projected to increase to one billion tons by 2030.

The circular economy is a new way of creating value, and ultimately prosperity. It works by extending a products lifespan through improved design and servicing, and relocating waste from the end of the supply chain to the beginning. This circular approach, in effect, uses resources more efficiently by using them over and over, not only once. Recycling is a key part of the circular economy, helping to protect our natural resources. “At WasteCon this year we will put focus on the

circular economy,” says Grobbelaar.

In terms of recycling, there are some packaging materials in South Africa that have performed really well, such as the high-density polyethylene (HDPE), used for milk bottles. “We need to look at the recycling value chain of such a plastic packaging material to see how we can apply this to other materials,” says Grobbelaar.

WasteCon 2020 will be a showcase of best practice and sustainable waste management solutions, including recycling. The conference will take place over a period of three days with plenary sessions, panel discussions, and workshops presented by industry experts.

“We look forward to the variety of industry role players who meet at this event every year: government, private waste sector, recyclers, waste and material researchers, and producers. Our aim for WasteCon this year is to encourage collaboration with all industry stakeholders to improve the full recycling value chain to stimulate the circular economy.”

For more information about WasteCon2020 visit the website: www.wastecon.co.za

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