



CITY OF JOHANNESBURG
Councilor Matshidiso Mfikoe
MMC: EISD

PIKITUP MEDIA BRIEFING ON TRASH TO TREASURE PROGRAMME

26 Sep 2012

Program Director: Ms. Nkhensani Makhubela

Chairperson of the Board: Prof Tshilidzi Marwala

Members of the Board

Acting MD. Mr. Lawrence Boya

EISD Executive Director: Mr. Tiaan Ehlers

Senior Managers of Pikitup and CoJ

Members of the Media

Distinguished Guest

Ladies and gentlemen

Programme Director, I bring you warm and special greetings from the Executive Mayor of the City of Johannesburg Cllr. Mpho Parks Tau and from Members of his Mayoral Committee.

It was upon the Executive Mayor's wish to be here personally this morning to deliver the main address of this occasion, but, due to his tight schedule and often constricted diary, he had to attend to other equally important council business.

As the Member of the Mayoral Committee responsible for Environment and Infrastructure Services Department I was delegated to represent the Executive Mayor on his absentia.

Programme Director; before I could get into the gist of the speech, please allow me to share with everybody here this morning a noteworthy quotation which I borrowed from a renowned Economist, environmentalist, activist and author Professor David Korten;

“To achieve true sustainability, we must reduce our “garbage index” – that which we permanently throw away into the environment that will not be naturally recycled for reuse - to near zero. Productive activities must be organised as closed systems. Minerals and other nonbiodegradable resources, once taken from the ground, must become a part of society’s permanent capital stock and be recycled in perpetuity. Organic materials may be disposed into the natural ecosystems, but only in ways that assure that they are absorbed back into the natural production system.”

Programme Director, in his inaugural State of the City Address, the Executive Mayor declared that the City of Johannesburg remains committed to the Polokwane Declaration of zero waste to landfill sites.

He further stated that the City will take leadership, but the public needs to be part of the solution.

In this regard, Pikitup will be implementing separation at source projects across the City, after piloting it in Waterval.

We are convinced that if we mobilise communities to sort waste at a household level, this will go a long way in waste reduction and the creation of a clean city.

As we do so, we will work with those who eke out a living by selling waste and create sustainable job opportunities for them.

In this regard, we will explore all legal avenues to ensure that we manage waste differently but most importantly we want communities to drive this initiative.

This long term programme will enable many to earn themselves a food voucher or income to put bread on the table.

Various education and awareness campaigns as well as recycling initiatives will be intensified to get each and every citizen involved in this initiative.

As one of the flagship projects of the Executive Mayor in support of the 2040 Growth and Development Strategy of the City of Johannesburg provides for the establishment of a recycling economy in the City which includes promoting the separation of recyclable waste at source.

In response to this Pikitup has developed a separation at source strategy which provides for exposing 325 000 households within the City to the separation of recyclable waste at source.

Roll out plan to be phased in over a two year period and the areas that are being targeted in the 2012/2013 financial year are the Zondi depot area (108 000 households in Soweto), Diepsloot (46 000 households), Orange Farm (46 000 households), Ivory Park (60 000 households) and Waterval depot area (67 000 households).

Programme Director, in line with the Legal Framework, such as the National Environmental Management Act of 1998, the Polokwane Declaration, the Integrated Pollution and Waste Management Policy of SA, the National Environmental Management: Waste Act of 2008 and the Waste Management By-law of the CoJ - to name but a few.

We believe that a change in mindset where residents are encouraged to start seeing the value in the waste generated, that a vast amount of material can be repurposed through recycling.

This should then lead to a change in behavior where ultimately less waste is directed to landfills and people begin to separate waste for recycling purposes.

The phased approach is a managed process to ensure that the project becomes viable and remains sustainable in the long-term.

Thus, it is in the City's best interest and that of the residents, to allow Pikitup an opportunity to put in place a well thought out plan, taking time to sort out all the kinks as it goes along.

Pikitup's mandate has always been to collect and dispose of household waste; recycling was never part of their primary business. Now, as part of the City's new changing course, in line with the Joburg 2040 Strategy, Pikitup has had to refocus the way in which it carries out its mandate.

In light of all of this, the City has set its own target that will measure the success of this initiative, the City will reduce waste to landfill through Waste minimization and recycling with the target of 20% of all general waste by 2016.

The City will again construct and initiate alternative waste treatment and processing plants(s) about 500,000 tons per annum plant or 30% of all general waste by 2016.

And we will establish a recycling economy in the City of Johannesburg through separation at source to reduce, reuse and recycle.

As part of our commitment in waste minimization and recycling we will encourage the communities to separate recyclable waste at source, support the establishment of additional composting facilities in partnership with the private sector, Support the establishment of builders' rubble crushing plants (in partnership with the private sector, upgrade garden sites to accept recyclable waste separated at source and support all legitimate recycling initiatives.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY RECYCLING ECONOMY

The Executive Mayor has committed to drive an agenda which focuses on the following areas:

- Improved quality of life
- A resilient, liveable and sustainable urban economy
- A job intensive and competitive economy that harnesses the potential of all citizens
- High performing metropolitan government that proactively contributes to and builds a sustainable, socially economy Gauteng city region.

For Pikitup this paints a very clear picture. As an Municipal owned Entity, Pikitup needs to deliver on the following to make the Executive Mayor's agenda come alive:

- Clean and healthy environment
- Job creation and entrepreneurial opportunities (by empowering people through its programmes)
- Saving of valuable landfill airspace
- Commoditising waste in driving a broad culture of recycling across the city.

While the constitution of South Africa spells out environmental rights in terms of the health and the well-being of the society, it also places obligations on the need for protection and the management of the entire environment. The current trends in environmental sustainability put enormous pressure on Cities which serve as incubators for economic and human development.

Without securing natural resources, cities cannot sustain human and economic development. Cities like Johannesburg therefore need to seek new ways of overcoming critical natural resource constraints and reframing economic and human development within the context of sustainability.

The City believes environmental conservation contributes directly and indirectly to the fight against poverty. We all need sustainable and desirable livelihoods, and therefore partnerships of this nature should be nurtured to grow if the challenge is to be met.

In closing Programme Director, allow me to leave you with the thought provoking catchphrase which I borrowed from one of my favourite social activist, founder of the international Earth Day: John McConnell

“Let every individual and institutions now think and act as a responsible trustee of Earth, seeking choices in ecology, economics and, that will provide a sustainable future, eliminate pollution, poverty and violence, awaken the wonder of life and foster peaceful progress in the human adventure.”

Thank you.