

Inaugural African Marine Waste Conference develops strategic plan to tackle marine litter

Attended by approximately 200 delegates from nine African states and a further 10 countries from other continents, the inaugural African Marine Waste Conference recently took place in PE. The conference aimed to continue the concerted effort of better managing marine litter with the help of governments, NGOs, researchers and other stakeholders.



Leaders in the local plastics and packaging industries participate in a panel discussion chaired by Douw Steyn, sustainability director at Plastics|SA.

"By bringing together delegates primarily from Africa, along with advisers from other continents, a variety of different sectors and insights were represented. We participated in various fruitful discussions and debates on issues relating to marine waste in Africa, enabling us to develop a strategic plan entitled "Marine Waste Strategy: Guide to Action for Africa", for tackling and alleviating the continent's waste problems," disclosed Douw Steyn, sustainability director at Plastics|SA.

Making waste profitable

In addition to presentations, panel discussions and parallel sessions, workshops on microplastics, data and research, and mobile applications were also held over the duration of the conference. Plastics|SA chaired an industry workshop featuring participants from various sectors. Industry representatives, scientists, educators, waste disposal experts and the maritime sector were encouraged to engaged in a debate which aimed to identify the issues that have the biggest impact on the marine environment.

"We recognise that there is still a lot of work that needs to be done, but look back at very big inroads that we have already managed to make to address the problem head-on and offer real solutions.

"If we continue to take the right steps, we believe that waste can indeed become profitable to countries of Africa. The environment, human health and tourism are but a few areas that stand to benefit significantly if we are to devise a workable strategy for managing waste in and around our continent," Steyn concluded.

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