

Mother City to host Environment Journalism Conference

The City of Cape Town is to host an international conference for environmental journalists on 20 and 21 November, as part of its Earth Festival.

Under the theme 'Sustaining Environmental Journalism,' the event will create an opportunity for writers from many different countries to share issues, challenges and successes.

'Keynote speakers, panel discussions and outreach tours will combine in a gathering designed to make a difference, to journalists as well as the planet,' conference coordinator Alison Barnard explained at the weekend, when announcing the programme details.

Darryl D'Monte, Chairperson of the Federation of Environmental Journalists, will paint the international environmental picture, when the subject of water resources, and energy utilisation is discussed on the first day of the conference.

Later in the day, David Daitz, CEO of Western Cape Nature Conservation, and the International Conservation Union's Salim Fakir will tackle the subject 'Biodiversity - it's a business'.

The rest of the conference will be devoted to issues such as 'the economics of community involvement in tourism' and 'the interaction between government and non-government organisations', with practical sessions on corporate environmental reporting, and 'How to make the environment news'.

Other speakers include Professor Guy Berger, Head of Journalism at Rhodes University, Peter Willis of the Cambridge Business and Environmental Programme, and Caroline Southey, who is the editor of the Financial Mail.

Sketching the background to the conference, Ms Barnard said journalists had an important task as conveyors of vital environmental information.

'The world is troubled, climatic change is upon us, the gap between rich and poor is widening, water is becoming increasingly scarce, seas are being over-fished, and AIDS is rampant,' she pointed out.

For these and many other reasons, it was important for journalists to find and get out vital environmental stories to the public.

Journalists wishing to attend the event can contact Ms Barnard at Tel. 021-670 148 or Cell 083 414 6729 or e-mail alison@africankaleidoscope.co.za.

Article by Dirk Nel, courtesy of BuaNews, www.gcis.gov.za/buanews.

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