

SA vinyls delegates attend global expos

The South African vinyls industry was recently represented at two major international PVC events that took place in Europe, namely PVC 2014, which was held in Brighton, England, and the Vinyl Sustainability Forum, which took place in Rome, Italy.



Delanie Bezuidenhout, the CEO of SAVA, headed up a South African delegation of 10 leading role players in the local PVC industry who attended PVC 2014 in Brighton, England. Gary van Eyk, Alistair Calder and Terry Coetzer (Sun Ace), Pierre Mans (Chem Systems), Rodger Petri (Continental Compounds), Maria Stephanou and Rishi Madho (SASOL), joined Delanie at the triennial Brighton conference, which is widely regarded as the world's largest and most reputable forum to support the future of PVC globally via information, education, debate and discussion.

"It was a fantastic opportunity to learn at first-hand about the latest developments and breakthroughs in the field of PVC," Delanie said. "We were privileged to be able to attend a very full and varied programme of original papers covering all aspects of PVC - ranging from formulation through to recovery and recycling - along with 490 other delegates from 36 countries," she said.

The keynote address was delivered by the honourable Sir Jonathon Porritt, founder director of Forum for the Future and perhaps best known for his championing of green issues and his advocacy of the Green Party of England and Wales. "We have to know exactly what we mean by sustainability to be able to determine our journey towards it. PVC has become the material that has provided me with a yardstick for sustainability," Sir Jonathon told the audience.

Although the international speakers all touched on a variety of different topics, the issues of PVC recycling and the need for the global PVC industry to shift its focus to all parties that influence the wellbeing of our businesses - including journalists and critics - were two of the most prevalent themes that came across.

"Sophi McMillan of Australia's Vinyl Council made an equally impressive case for recovering PVC in hospitals, showing how this could be a cost-neutral exercise and, therefore, to the benefit of all concerned," Delanie said.

Vinyl Sustainability Forum

The theme for this year's Vinyl Sustainability Forum, which took place from 8 to 9 May in Rome, Italy, was "Enhancing the value of partnerships". According to Delanie, the presentations made at this year's forum centred on enhancing partnerships and stakeholder engagement.

Delanie presented a paper entitled "Certification Programme - South Africa", focussing on SAVA's vinyl product label, which was recently launched at the association's AGM.

"There were more than 100 participants representing over 20 countries at this year's forum and they were very eager to find out more about what we are doing in South Africa," Delanie said. She was asked specific questions about the value of international partnerships to SAVA, as well as about how the certification programme enhances partnerships for the association.

Delanie explained that the certification programme offered SAVA with an opportunity to combine their strengths, exchange ideas and to share challenges and solutions. "We are able to benchmark our programmes and progress and access a repository of peer-reviewed research. All of the international PVC programmes complement each other and we are able to focus our efforts, thereby achieving sustainability through a collective approach," Delanie explained. "Price does not always convey the true benefit of a product. Certification programmes provide its partners with an added advantage to differentiate their products and positively influence the purchase decision. "It drives transformation in the value chain and encourages broad-based participation," she said.

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