

MTN, German organisation to tackle e-waste

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Waste is a growing challenge in SA and Africa and needs to be addressed by the public and private sector. MTN has partnered with the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) to manage the safe disposal and recycling of electronic goods such as cellphones.



MTN said the partnership seeks to raise awareness about the safe recycling, management and disposal of electronic goods. It will also assist small and medium-size companies to develop an e-waste recycling industry.

According to MTN, electronic waste, or e-waste, is any form of electrical or electronic equipment that is no longer required, such as fridges, air conditioners, computers, phones and other devices.

As global consumption of electrical devices grows, and products become obsolete, the challenge of how to responsibly dispose of e-waste was growing alarmingly, said Christian de Faria, MTN Group senior vice-president, commercial and innovation.

"Global mismanagement of e-waste is resulting in large-scale dumping, often in open landfills, predominantly in areas or countries with poor levels of environmental governance or enforcement ability," he said.

Some of the goods are dumped in developing countries in Africa and Asia.

MTN SA will roll out e-waste collection points at key public areas such as schools and shopping malls in two major cities. It will collect all types of cellular phones that are not used. Some valuable components from those recycled cellphones could be re-used in other handsets.

GIZ, which has started similar e-waste partnerships in India and Morocco, will bring in technical support and develop standards and disposal protocols for the e-waste pilot project.

Ellen Kallinowsky, co-ordinator for the GIZ Centre for Co-operation with the Private Sector, said partnering with the private sector to address developmental issues such as e-waste was a crucial component of GIZ strategy.

"E-waste is a growing challenge in SA and Africa, and if not jointly addressed from both the public and private sectors will become an overwhelming challenge," she said.

MTN could replicate a similar project in countries where it operates, but that would depend on its success in SA.

Source: Business Day

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