



CITY OF JOHANNESBURG

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MMC: Environment and Infrastructure Services Department

City of Johannesburg Speech Extract by
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MMC: Environment and Infrastructure Services

World Environment Day: We must work together to beat plastic pollution

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Note to editors: *The following is an extract of the speech delivered by MMC de Jager during today's World Environment Day clean-up held in partnership with Pikitup at Greyville Primary School in Lenasia.*

In 1972 the United Nations decided to have the first World Environment Day. Since then, this auspicious day has been celebrated all over the world, with this year's theme being "Beating Plastic Pollution".

As the government of the City of Johannesburg, we are mindful that a sustainable city requires partnerships with all communities to protect the environment - and ultimately - ourselves.

We need to remind ourselves that what we do today will impact the lives of those that follow. With June being Youth Month, this year's theme could not be more relevant. We have become dependent on plastic more than ever before and it is therefore our responsibility to educate youth about the importance of sustainability and the impact of plastic on the environment.

That is why we are here **today at Greyville Primary School in Lenasia** – to educate these youth about the dangers of illegal dumping and the importance of recycling.

The sustainable growth of the City of Johannesburg is premised on five pillars, namely:

- To grow the economy and to create jobs;
- To enhance quality of life by improving services and taking care of the environment;
- To advance pro-poor development that provides meaningful redress; and
- To build caring, safe and secure communities
- To institute an honest, responsive and productive government.

Pillar Two specifically frames the Environment and Infrastructure Portfolio's mandate, namely to enhance the quality of life by improving services and taking care of the environment.

That is why we must ensure that we reduce the consumption of natural resources; reduce carbon emissions and mitigate the impact of climate change and specifically extreme weather events; minimise environmental pollution; and protect the City's natural environment.

After last year's Environment Day, the City launched the **A Re Sebetseng** monthly clean-up campaign on 14 August 2017. A Re Sebetseng means *let's work*, and is based Rwanda's monthly clean-up campaign Umuganda, which has proven to be highly successful due to the involvement of government employees. A Re Sebetseng is based on this concept and with Mayor Herman Mashaba at the forefront, we have also launched a monthly employee clean-up on 14 February 2018, where our officials clean around their offices.

A Re Sebeteng encourages all residents to assume responsibility for the areas where they live, work and play every day. Since the launch last year, we have had more than 35 000 people participating in more than 1300 clean-up events city wide.

At a municipal level, specifically in the City of Johannesburg, we find that up to 70% of the household waste receptacle comprises of dry recyclables and organic waste (garden waste and food waste), waste that could have been recycled.

Pikitup introduced the **Separation-at-Source Programme** in 2009 and although the participation rate is low, Pikitup continues to roll out more recycling programmes.

Through education and awareness programmes, we have seen an increase in participating residents. From 1 July 2018, a phased approach to make Separation-at-Source mandatory will be introduced:

- **The public will be notified of Council's intention to implement Section 22 of the City of Johannesburg Waste Management By-laws.** The purpose of this notice is to comply with the section as stated in the Waste Management By-laws, promulgated on 30 July 2013, No 216.
- Pikitup is currently providing the service of source separation of dry recyclables in certain areas and has also developed organic/garden waste drop-off centres (i.e. garden sites) for the purpose of receiving organic garden waste from communities residing within the city.
- **For dry recyclables**, Pikitup will continue to provide the appropriate bags or receptacles and collect the dry recyclables on a prescribed collection schedule applicable to each area.
- **For organic garden waste**, it is the duty of the households to separate, store and transport their own organic garden waste and dispose of it at the nearest organic garden waste drop off centre.
- **Failure to separate waste at source in the affected suburbs** shall henceforth be an offence. Details on the affected suburbs are available at Pikitup depots and on the Pikitup website: www.pikitup.co.za

Pikitup has recorded the following figures in 2016/2017:

- 1, 425 million tonnes of waste was landfilled;
- Green waste diverted: 49000 tons;
- Builders rubble: 62000 tones and
- Dry recyclables: 39000 tons.

Illegal dumping and littering is costing Pikitup in excess of R60 million annually. This is R60 million wasted instead of spending it on other initiatives to reduce waste in the city.

These figures are staggering and call upon all of us to recycle more to protect and preserve the environment.

We are part of the environment, we are in the environment and we influence the environment.

On this World Environment Day, let's keep the following in mind: "If you can't reuse it, then you must refuse it!"

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