

## **CITY COMPILES 'GREENING' GUIDELINES FOR WORLD CONGRESS**

AS host city to one of the world's largest 'green' gatherings of local government leaders next year, the City of Cape Town has released a set of greening guidelines to help organisers reduce the environmental impact for the ICLEI World Congress 2006.

Over 600 delegates from about 470 municipalities all over the world are expected to gather at the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) from 27 February to 3 March 2006 to share ideas on building sustainable cities.

"The greening guidelines that the City has developed for the congress will serve as benchmark for conference organisers wishing to reduce the environmental impact of all major events not only in Cape Town but also in the rest of South Africa," says Grace Stead, the City's Local Agenda 21 Co-ordinator.

According to tourism authorities, 62 national and international meetings, attracting a total of 27 000 delegates, took place in Cape Town during the past year alone.

It is estimated that during a typical five day conference, 1 000 attendees will use an average of 1 500 reams of paper, 25 000 plates, 35 000 napkins, 30 000 cups or glasses and 35 000 cans or bottles.

"There are many benefits for Cape Town when large conferences are held in the city, but inevitably Cape Town will experience additional stresses on natural resources such as water, energy and air quality," says Stead.

"This prompted the City to compile a set of greening guidelines for the ICLEI World Congress 2006 to help organisers make environmentally and socially responsible decisions in terms of waste reduction, water reduction, energy efficiency and the sustainable procurement of goods and services," she says.

"Waste is a major problem at conferences, but it is one of the easier problems to solve. Practical tips include back-to-back printing of documents on recycled, chlorine-free paper; the provision of separate waste bins for paper, plastics and other recyclable materials; the minimising of packaging material; and the inclusion of reusable promotional material, ideally from recycled materials.

"It also makes economic sense for exhibitors to only bring what is needed for the event. Over-packaging creates waste and certain materials such as polystyrene are not recyclable. Also, one should avoid mass distribution of handouts and limit the number of promotional handouts only to those interested in more information. Unused items can be collected for use at another event or donated to local organisations.

"We actively encourage organisers to support local suppliers and use locally manufactured products because this reduces transportation requirements and the associated environmental impacts," says Stead.

Successful examples of event greening include the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney Australia which employed renewable energy on large scale, and the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg which focused on the reuse and recycling of waste.

Organisers of major sports events such as the 2006 World Cup Soccer in Germany and London 2012 Olympics have also incorporated environmental considerations in their preparations.

The CTICC, venue for the ICLEI World Congress 2006, already has its own greening policy that promotes energy-efficient systems and recycling practices.

According to Sharon Baharavi, corporate communications manager of the CTICC, the building has been designed to harness natural light in all the public areas, resulting in lower energy demands.

"To further minimise the use of electricity, 75% of the lighting fixtures within the centre are fluorescent, low voltage bulbs are installed as far as possible, and dimmers are standard in meeting rooms and auditoria.

"Air-conditioning systems are adjusted periodically to suit the prevailing seasonal conditions. Areas requiring air-conditioning are selected on a daily basis. This results in meaningful savings in energy, as unoccupied venues do not receive unnecessary air-conditioning," says Baharavi.

As a water conservation measure, all toilets have dual flush mechanisms.

The CTICC also maximises reusable items such as table linen, cutlery and glassware to reduce the amount of waste created. Its procurement policy also favours fresh rather than processed foods, and the supply of biodegradable soaps and detergents in dispensers rather than individual sachets.

During build up and breakdown of exhibitions, energy is conserved by dimming lights to an acceptable level. To discourage unnecessary waste, exhibitors are required to pay for their own waste removal. All the waste created by the CTICC itself is separated on site and recycled.

"The aim of the ICLEI World Congress is to find local solutions for global challenges, with a specific focus on local government best practice for building safe communities, poverty alleviation, integrated environmental resource management and sustainable procurement.

"To practise what we preach, we will ensure that the ICLEI Congress is a truly 'green' event. An exhibitors' manual has now been issued - with waste reduction being a priority under the slogan, 'reduce, reuse and recycle'," says Stead.

Copies of the ICLEI greening principles and exhibition manual are available electronically from [grace.stead@capetown.gov.za](mailto:grace.stead@capetown.gov.za).

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