

PPC Ltd, Coca-Cola and Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries weigh in on sustainability in SA

Issued by [Topco Media](#)

8 Dec 2020

On Day 1 of this year's anticipated Africa Tech Week Virtual Summit, PPC Ltd - in existence for more than 100 years - hosted a pivotal panel discussion regarding impact efforts of resource generation and ideas surrounding 'the circular economy'. A project close to their hearts, environmental, financial, and social performance, that is sustainable, is a list of traits that has been ingrained in their company's DNA.



For the sake of this key moment during the event, three panellists came together on the day to address the tech and innovation community, on decoupling economic growth from resource generation. Jacques Vermeulen, Group CEO of Coca-Cola Beverages Africa, Roland van Wijnen, Group CEO of PPC Ltd, and Kgauta Mokoena, Chief Director: Chemicals and Waste Policy, Monitoring and Evaluation at Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, presented a riveting talk, urging the public and businesses to decrease their negative impact on the environment in order to ensure a better future for humanity as a whole.

PPC Ltd contributes to environmental awareness

Roland van Wijnen, Group CEO of PPC Ltd, encouraged the public to think beyond the rise of new buildings and properties in South Africa, urging the country to comprehend the significant impact that running a building space could potentially have on the environment, and the future of humanity as a whole:

"We are proud to contribute to a better quality of life for people in Africa - building schools, building hospitals - but obviously whilst we provide basic materials to make that all happen, we need to be very well aware that the building space is a very significant contributor to the CO₂ problems we have in the world... It sometimes pains me when I drive through the country and I see new buildings go up that are not taking into account the new technologies that we have available for insulation, for energy efficiency, for water recycling, and all these elements. So, what we [PPC Ltd] will strive for, is an economic growth, not just in financial terms, but also in well-being of our humanity at a lesser cost to the environment that we impact with the work we're doing," says Roland van Wijnen, Group CEO of PPC Ltd.

Accepting social responsibility

Other key takeaways included Jacques Vermeulen's quick discussion on the importance of businesses, much like PPC Ltd, innovating and changing their packaging processes for the better, by paying close attention to changes in consumer behaviour and fluctuating needs. A key takeaway from his discussion, was that the global pandemic shifted many companies', much like Coca-Cola Beverages: Africa, attention towards producing and implementing safer packaging options:

"Look, it's quite a big question, with lots of potential answers. From an internal process perspective, we use a lot of innovation around technology to reimagine our packaging because as you could imagine the packaging carries the product, and I guess in today's world with Covid scares, we'll find probably more of an increase in focusing on the safety of packaging... our whole aim is to make the packaging better so that we don't harm the planet and the business. We are also trying to increase our levels of recycling the packaging, specifically," he exclaims.

Governing the circular economy

Many people in the virtual audience were also quite preoccupied with the circular economy as a strategy to decouple resource consumption from economic growth. Kgauta Mokoena, Chief Director: Chemicals and Waste Policy, Monitoring and Evaluation at Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, elaborated on this concept from a South African context:

"We need to make use of alternative fuel resources, as opposed to using up one source... At the same time it talks to how we can innovate as a country; the role of research development and innovation is becoming key to seeing what best practices we can come up with... As well as how to implement those and find alternative materials - where there might be savings and opportunities through the circular economy... We must also look into ensuring that these alternative materials can be kept within this loop/cycle for as long as possible, as opposed to take, make and dispose... that's resource loss in the long run," he explains.

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About PPC Ltd

PPC is an iconic material and solutions provider of quality and consistent cement, aggregates, metallurgical-grade lime, burnt dolomite, limestone, ready-mix and fly ash. We also provide technical support to our customers. PPC's story stretches back over 127 years to where we were first incorporated on the outskirts of Pretoria in 1892. As the first cement plant in South Africa, we have established ourselves as a resilient organisation by adapting to ever-changing economic, operating and political environments. This sub-Saharan brand continues to grow beyond South African borders into Botswana, Zimbabwe, Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda where our footmark extends. We are proud to be a leading provider of quality building materials and solutions to empower people to experience a better quality of life.

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