

Setting the record straight!

PLASTICS|SA has responded to recent anti-plastics articles that appeared in the media, specifically the Daily Maverick. Executive director of Plastics|SA, Anton Hanekom's writes:

"There comes a time when we find it necessary to stand up to defend the truth, set the record straight and refute claims that are defamatory, biased and damaging to an industry that strives to make a valuable contribution to the economy, the country and the environment."

Hanekom says that as South Africa recently recorded the highest unemployment rate in the world (34.4%) with 7.8 million citizens jobless, one would expect that any effort to create a public-private partnership that is focussed on sustaining and creating jobs would be

welcomed.

"It therefore defies belief that the publication would support the view that Government should close down an industry that provides employment to roughly 60 000 people and contributed R68 billion (2.3%) directly to GDP and 20% to the manufacturing GDP in 2020. During the same year, R2.1 billion was injected into the informal sector through the purchasing of recyclable plastic waste," he adds.

Hanekom also defends South Africa's mechanical recycling rates, which currently are at around 22%.

"Although it is true that there is ample amount of plastic waste available within our own borders, it is not necessarily the right type, quality or volume that can be

used by recyclers to produce a consistent supply of the type or grade that is required. These recyclers need to keep their businesses going, workers employed and the industry operational," says Hanekom. These recyclers have to import waste from neighbouring SADC countries if local supply runs short.

"We are confident that plastic waste imports will eventually be completely phased out as South Africa's EPR schemes are being developed. The PROs will implement improved collection and recycling mechanisms, focus on design for recyclability, reduce unnecessary packaging through light weighting, promote the use of recycled content in new products and develop new end-markets for recycled plastics," says Hanekom.