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MEDIA STORY

Coastal clean-up takes place on Robben Island

Having recently celebrating World Fisheries Day on 21 November 2020, more than 150 volunteers rolled up their sleeves to help rid Robben Island of ocean waste and pollution that has washed up on its coastline. The initiative, which was spear-headed by Coca-Cola Peninsula Beverages (CCPB) and the Robben Island Museum (RIM), is focused on raising awareness about ocean pollution and protecting the sensitive habitat for endangered species on the Marine Protected Area.

While the World Heritage Site draws more than 300 000 visitors annually, one of its biggest challenges is the waste that it encounters on its coastlines largely attributed to waste from passing ships and land-based sources such as litter from Cape Town's stormwater drains and rivers that ultimately flow into Table Bay.

CCPB's commitment to responsible citizenship includes the conservation of natural resources and protection of the soil, water and climate required to sustain life on earth.

"As a responsible business, we remain committed to protecting our environment and shorelines, which is why the coastal clean-up is so important. This will form part of a series of coastal clean-ups that CCPB will host through the year," says Priscilla Urquhart, Public Affairs and Communications Manager for CCPB.

"This initiative is in line with The Coca-Cola Company's global commitment of a World Without Waste – a vision to collect and recycle the equivalent of every bottle and can it sells by 2030," Urquhart adds.

It has been estimated that around 80% of marine debris is from land-based sources. Countless marine animals and sea birds therefore become entangled in marine debris or ingest it.

As part of RIM's strategic focus to better understand and protect its natural environment, they have shifted their focus to understanding people's relationships with the oceans. The World Heritage Site therefore strives to implement conservation programmes that are built around strategic partnerships with the private sector and community engagement.

According to Thabo Seshoka, Senior Manager: Heritage and Research at RIM, the island will continue to be a significant part of South Africa's history, as a National Museum, a World Heritage Site, a tourist attraction and as a Marine Protected Area.

"Our role has evolved over the years to ensure sustainable tourism and the conservation of natural and cultural heritage. The clean-up comes at a crucial time for the RIM, as we celebrate our first-year anniversary of being declared a Marine Protected Area", says Seshoka.

These areas are used to protect marine species, habitats and cultural or underwater heritage. They are also designed to restore over-exploited marine stocks, promote research and eco-tourism and protect coastal and offshore habitats.

“Between RIM and CCPB, we share the common goal of protecting coastal and offshore habitats,” Seshoka added.

The goal of the coastal clean-up is to promote greater environmental conservation by individuals, organisations and governments, as well as to enhance and preserve ecosystems and wildlife living on and around the island.

“We all need to play a bigger role in actively ensuring that waste is minimised as much as possible. We remain committed to continually raising awareness around plastic waste, as well as working towards a cleaner environment,” concludes Urquhart.

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Notes to editor:

About Coca-Cola Peninsula Beverages

Coca-Cola Peninsula Beverages (CCPB) is the local bottler and distributor of the The Coca-Cola Company in the Western and Northern Cape. Products and brands include Coca-Cola, Sprite, Fanta, Stoney, Appletiser, Powerade, Bonaqua, PowerPlay and Monster amongst others.

CCPB has been operational for 80 years, having first opened for business in 1940. Their state-of-the-art bottling facility is based in Parow Industria, with distribution centres in Athlone, Worcester and Koelbly.

For more information, visit www.peninsulabeverage.co.za.

About Robben Island Museum

Robben Island Museum (RIM) is a public entity responsible for managing, maintaining, presenting, sustainable development and marketing of Robben Island as a National and World Heritage site in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act of 1999 and the 1972 World Heritage Convention respectively.

RIM was established in 1997 and was declared as a cultural institution per the Cultural Institutions Act, No 119 of 1998 and a public entity by the Public Finance Management Act No 1 of 1999. It was declared a World Heritage Site in 1999.