

MEDIA RELEASE**COLLECTION POINTS OFFICIALLY AVAILABLE FOR USED HOUSEHOLD BATTERIES**

Windhoek, 06 JULY 2017

In its mission to not only identify, but also find solutions for the three R's of Reduce, Reuse and Recycle, the Recycle Namibia Forum (RNF) in Partnership with Pick n Pay (PnP) Namibia – a subsidiary of the Ohlthaver & List (O&L) Group –; VARTA Consumer Batteries Namibia, and the City of Windhoek last week officially launched a platform for Windhoek residents for the safe disposal of household batteries through the provision of permanent collection points.

RNF Coordinator, Anita Witt: “During the past year, it has become evident that residents of Windhoek are aware that disposing of batteries via normal household refuse could be damaging to the environment, but that no other solution or option was available on where to take these items for safe disposal. The RNF and the City of Windhoek earlier this year had a trial run at a local green market day which saw large volumes of batteries delivered at the event. This indicated that there is a need for consumers to safely dispose of these items at designated points. Given the number of enquiries, as well as the tremendous support during our first collection earlier this year, it was clear that the residents of Windhoek are keen to do the right thing. The RNF was thus instrumental in meeting the need of Windhoek residents by ensuring that systems are put in place for batteries to be safely disposed of via these clearly marked collection bins. It is not only creating the awareness of the 3 R's that is important, but also for the RNF to seek ways to encourage minimizing waste sent to landfills and dumpsites, but also to find solutions for problem items, such as batteries in this instance.”

Witt further said that the market leader of household consumer batteries, VARTA Namibia, which is also an RNF member, immediately agreed to join the initiative by setting up the first collection points in Windhoek, with the commitment from the City of Windhoek's Waste Management Division to ensure that the batteries are safely disposed of at the hazardous waste site at Kupferberg landfill.

According to Harald Bartsch from Vision Sales and Marketing, the distributors for VARTA Consumer Batteries in Namibia, by supporting this project, VARTA Namibia has taken the lead to actively support the growing movement of Extended Producers Responsibility (EPR) - where producers assume responsibility for the correct treatment of disposal of post-consumer products. EPR ensures that producers are given a significant responsibility – financial and/or physical – for the treatment or disposal of post-consumer products. Bartsch: “We decided to actively get involved in the safe disposal of household batteries, and will be the first consumer battery company in Namibia to launch a campaign like this in partnership with the RNF and PnP. As a leading battery manufacturer we would like to give back to our community and to ensure we fulfil our part in protecting the environment”.

Tunda Tjaverua, the Solid Waste Management Officer of City of Windhoek and coordinator of the campaign, says this project is critical in the sense that batteries contain elements which are harmful to the environment. Tjaverua: “This project will make it possible for the safe disposal of batteries in an environmentally friendly way. In short certain type of batteries contain harmful chemicals which can cause soil and water pollution and endanger human and wildlife. For example, cadmium which can still be found in a few battery types can cause



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damage to soil micro-organisms and affect the breakdown of organic matter. It can also bio-accumulate in fish, which reduces their numbers and makes them unfit for human consumption.”

O&L Environmental Manager, who is also the chairperson of the RNF, Gloudi de Beer calls on the public for cooperation and support in making a success of this initiative. De Beer: “This is another opportunity for us to contribute to creating a safe environment, and sustaining our environment not only for ourselves but also for future generations. It is critical that we all support initiatives such as this, for the health and safety of us all and the future of this country. If we do not participate and support, this will not work.”

PnP Marketing Manager, Victoria Moller says as a leading retailer, PnP fully supports this project. Moller: “We are excited to be a part of this, and cannot emphasize enough how important initiatives like these are in our society. The future of our environment, and the safety thereof is our responsibility. If we do not do what is necessary to keep it clean, safe and healthy, who will? I also want to commend the RNF for its efforts in contributing to the future of our environment. With bodies such as the RNF, there is hope. But if we do not support them, their existence is void.”

Collection points are available at PnP Auas Valley, PnP Eros and PnP Megacentre.

Ends,

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The Mission of the RNF is to make Namibia the country in Africa that achieves the highest success in promoting the 3R's of Recycling, Reusing and Reducing.



