

21 April 2106

PRESS RELEASES

600 words

Global aggregates bodies meet

Aggregates associations from across the globe gathered in Cape Town recently to dissect issues facing the worlds' sand and stone suppliers and pave a path towards more sustainable exploitation of a dwindling resource.

Members of the Global Aggregates Information Network (GAIN) represent aggregates associations of diverse countries and focusses on improving supply, as well as issues that may threaten the industry. Despite a seemingly endless supply of sand and stones underfoot and around us, only certain materials are suitable for the purposes of building and construction and these are being rapidly depleted in urbanised areas.

The result is that crucial building materials either need to be transported over long, costly distances, or suitable land resources need to be identified and excluded from development plans in order to ensure that materials are available to develop surrounding areas. These were some of the major concerns debated by the network at the recent Cape Town conference.

Local flavour

The Aggregate and Sand Producers Association of Southern Africa (Aspasa) became a member of GAIN two years ago and proposed to host the international meeting to give members a view of quarrying in South Africa. "We have an advanced quarrying industry with among the highest health, safety and environmental standards in the world.

"Yet we are also among the most heavily regulated and taxed industries in the world, so it is extremely beneficial to see how Europe, as well as countries such as Australia and the United States manage their resources. In Australia, for example, its government has separated aggregate quarrying from mining and has categorised the industry as a separate 'Construction Materials' industry that is strategic to development of the country and its infrastructure.

"Rather than burdening their quarries with taxes and unnecessary red tape the Australian quarries are protected and incorporated into long term plans for town planning and spatial development. In the USA the quarrying industry faced a bad reputation and increasing pressure from lobbying groups with a "not in my backyard" approach. As a result they developed community outreach campaign designed to draw surrounding communities in and show them the importance of quarries. Some

quarries even signed social contracts with surrounding communities as a framework of acceptable operations,” says Nico.

Overcoming obstacles

He continues that in other parts of the world such as Columbia with its unequalled biodiversity the industry is severely hamstrung by environmental protection regulations and as a result are forced to develop ways of quarrying with less impact on the environment.

Thanks to geological factors some countries in Europe do not have access to any suitable aggregates for building and have to import large volumes of sand and stone at a considerable cost to citizens. “As a result we can study their transport methods to efficiently transport aggregates over longer distances in future. These countries are also masters at recycling to produce high quality building materials.”

Nico concludes that global citizens require between 3-16 tons of aggregates each per annum in order to maintain a civilised society. Without aggregates we would have no roads, railways, buildings or other structure that house, protect and transport mankind. “It is therefore essential for organisations such as GAIN to take a leadership position by ensuring countries work together to find solutions to our dwindling viable aggregates supplies.”

Aspasa, Nico Pienaar, Tel: (011) 791 3327, Fax: 086 647 8034, Email: nico@aspasa.co.za, Web: www.aspasa.co.za

ENDS...

Issued on behalf of **Aspasa, Nico Pienaar**, Tel: (011) 791 3327, Fax: 086 647 8034, Email: nico@aspasa.co.za, Web: www.aspasa.co.za

By **Media Savvy Communications, Raymond Campling**, Tel: (011) 979 7207, Cell: 076 297 2775, Email: media@mediasavvy.biz, Web: www.mediasavvy.wozaonline.com