

Sumitomo Rubber SA CEO appointed as chair of tyre industry body

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Lubin Ozoux, CEO of Sumitomo Rubber South Africa (Pty) Ltd, has been appointed as the new chairperson of the South African Tyre Manufacturers Conference (SATMC), the representative body of the four global tyre manufacturers with manufacturing facilities in South Africa. He began his two-year term as SATMC Chairperson on 1 November 2022 and will serve in the role until late 2024.



Lubin Ozoux

Ozoux has hit the ground running alongside SATMC managing executive, Nduduzo Chala, to ensure progress on topics critical to the industry, country and manufacturing sector.

High on the agenda for the SATMC in 2023 is a drive to reduce the negative environmental impacts of waste tyres. Members are committed to finalising the Industry Waste Management Plan for Tyres this year and having a clear roadmap in place to reduce carbon emissions in the sector.

SATMC priorities in 2023 broadly centre around industry evolution, skills development for the future, localisation and supplier development efforts, as well as infrastructure maintenance.

However, Ozoux views waste management as a critical focus area. “We are collaborating with the Tyre Importers Association of South Africa (TIASA), the Tyre Equipment Parts Association (TEPA) and the government to ensure that steps are taken to drive improvements and sustainability in both collection and processing of tyre waste,” he said.

This includes working closely with tyre dealers to encourage correct storage of waste tyres, and exploring the commercial prospects for waste tyres, with the aim of supporting enterprise development and job creation in a circular economy.

Consultation is underway on the draft section 29 Integrated Industry Waste Management Plan for Tyres (IndWTMP), developed by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) on the notice of Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Barbara Creecy.

In terms of section 29(1) of the National Environmental Management: Waste Act 59 of 2008, the Plan provides requirements for the implementation of effective and efficient waste tyre management in South Africa and sets out guidelines and requirements for all tyre industry role-players. Failure to manage waste tyres as prescribed in the IndWTMP is a criminal offence.

Chala said the industry has long been advocating for a process that will cater for the processing of end-of-life tyres. The SATMC is also lobbying in relation to second-hand tyres or part-worn tyres, which remain unregulated in the country, posing a serious safety risk for road commuters.

“As such, among our priority areas is to ensure that there is a part-worn standard developed through the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) and to challenge the importation of second-hand passenger casings into the country as these end up on our roads, becoming not only an environmental hurdle, but more importantly, a safety risk,” says Chala.

He said maintaining South Africa’s position as the key automotive hub in Africa would require close collaboration with government, automotive sector players and other industry associations, as well as a policy environment conducive to the competitiveness and sustainability of manufacturing.

Tackling dumping and illicit trade

Among efforts to safeguard competitiveness and sustainability for local tyre manufacturing is the campaign to stem the proliferation of unfairly traded tyres from China.

“We want to partner with government and other stakeholders in the industry to ensure that dumping and illicit trade is stopped to ensure sustainability in the local tyre manufacturing sector. If South Africa is used for dumping activities from other parts of the world, we will soon see remaining factories shutting down, causing further loss of employment,” says Ozoux.

Ozoux said the SATMC and its members would respect the final findings of the International Trade Administration Commission (ITAC), which is currently investigating the issue of tyre dumping from China into South Africa. Following a preliminary investigation, ITAC imposed a provisional antidumping duty of 38.33% on car, passenger, truck and bus tyres dumped into the local market from China, applicable between 9 September 2022 to 8 March 2023.

He said all four SATMC members would continue to drive road safety, while striving for the sustainability of the local tyre manufacturing sector in 2023 and beyond.

“I look forward to creating positive opportunities within our environment, helping to ensure the country’s future prosperity. For me, it is critical to work with all four tyre manufacturers, government and the private sector to contribute to the sustainability of the local industry, create employment opportunities, accelerate economic reforms, address unfair international trade practices, reduce barriers to entrepreneurship and improve infrastructure,” he said.

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