

South Africans' response to climate change

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From 28 November to 9 December 2011 the city of Durban will host the United Nation's 17th Conference of the Parties (COP17) event, the leading international conference on climate change.



The South Africa Climate Change Response Expo runs alongside the main event as a public platform for understanding and debating issues around climate change. It is in this space where the public can enjoy performances, discussions and exhibitions, free to the public.

Event organisers, Interactive Africa, and exhibition specialists, Scan Display, collaborated on the production of the exhibition space while Durban-based architectural practice designworkshop : sa were approached to conceptualise the look and feel of the space.

More than 100 exhibitors will be showcasing products and services that offer various green solutions and alternatives. From solar powered printers, electric cars and motorbikes, to renewable energy and sustainable living solutions, there will be a vast range of greening initiatives on show. Each exhibitor signed a Responsible Exhibitor Charter, pledging to incorporate event greening principles into their exhibition stands.



"This is the ideal platform on which to showcase the fantastic work that South African designers and companies are doing to mitigate climate change. We trust that this expo will start a conversation about the different ways in which ordinary South Africans can help to reduce the adverse effects of climate change," says Dale Cupido, project manager at Interactive Africa.



Scan Display is committed to designing and managing the exhibition space in a green way. "This has added another dimension to the project and has generated some incredibly creative solutions," says Justin Hawes, managing director of Scan Display.

"This is a very exciting project given the scale of the event and the infrastructure required, the expected visitor numbers (3 000 people a day) and the importance of the climate change issue," says Hawes.

designworkshop : sa conceptualised the Africa Green Square, the Green Canopy and the Green Route for the South Africa Climate Change Response Expo space. These structures capture the essence of the COP17 event, making it accessible and interesting to the public, while also embodying the climatic conditions and cultural nuances of the location, Durban. designworkshop : sa has also used a selection of natural, sustainable materials that are indigenous to the region.

designworkshop : sa's Andrew Makin says about the structure: "It's essentially about resourcefulness, converting the ordinary to the extraordinary, the power of simplicity and the immense opportunity of scarcity rather than indulgence. About generating wonderfully emotive experiences by doing very little; using very little and letting the power and wonder of our abundant light generate the experience, and the gentle coastal breezes to do the work of cooling."

The South Africa Climate Change Response Expo will run from 28 November to 9 December 2011, 10am to 6pm every day except on Friday 2 and Saturday 3 December when it will close at 8pm. It will be held in the Centrum car park, on the corner of Bram Fischer Drive and Samora Machel Road in central Durban. Entrance is free to the public and locally produced food and beverages will be on sale. The COP17 conference will be shown via a live feed on the CCR TV screens.

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