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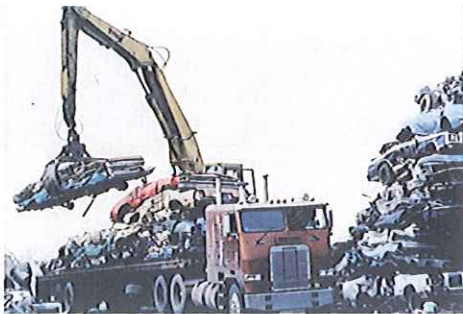
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Car recycling project takes root in Nigeria

By Rasheed Bisiriyu
Wednesday, 23 Mar 2011

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A recycling plant in San Pedro, United States.

Hundreds of over-used vehicles abandoned in different street corners across the country will soon be mopped up, thanks to a vehicle recycling initiative just introduced to the country.

Vehicle recycling is the dismantling of vehicles at the end of their useful life, for spare parts, says an online news portal, Wikipedia.

A car crusher is often used to reduce the size of the scrapped vehicle for ease of transportation to a steel mill.

WAO Global Nigeria is spearheading the project in the country, in conjunction with Rum Alliance of Japan.

The President of WAO Global, Mr. John Gbassa, said that the firm would work with relevant agencies of the government to commence the car recycling project this year.

The Director-General, National Automotive Council, Mr. Aminu Jalal, described it as the conversion of waste to wealth and a solution to a major environmental hazard.

Jalal, who spoke through NAC's Director, Policy and planning, at a sensitisation workshop organised last Tuesday by the project's initiators in Lagos, lamented that past efforts in this direction failed because they were largely uncoordinated.

"What we need is an integrated system, which WAO Global Nigeria and Rum Alliance of Japan (an association of automobile recycling plants in Japan) has offered to initiate with the support of NAC," he said.

The President, Kaiho Sangyo Company, Mr. Kondo Norihiko, in a presentation at the forum, said that the Nigerian automobile recycle promotion centre had the capacity to create employment and facilitate the technology transfer from Japan, if well developed,

He listed its other benefits as an increase in tax revenue and an improvement of the nation's environment.

Although Jalal noted that economic hardship was making many car owners to use their vehicles beyond their useful lifespan, this, he stressed, was at great risks to the users and others on the road.

He said, "Ordinarily, the cost of maintenance to meet with roadworthiness standards should force them to submit their vehicle for recycling but due to limitation in the enforcement of road worthiness, auto owners are able to drive poorly maintained vehicles on our roads."

The NAC boss, therefore, urged the vehicle inspection officers nationwide to step up their enforcement activities in order to rid the society of rickety vehicles.

Commenting on the issue, Howstuffworks.com also said recycling of expired or badly damaged cars was a lucrative business, which also made a lot of environmental sense.

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It said, "About 65 per cent of a junked car is made from steel (the rest is made from other metals plus glass, rubber and upholstery). The price for scrap steel and iron, though volatile, often hovers around \$250 per tonne.

"Expanding economies in Asia have led to a greater demand for scrap steel, bolstering the market worldwide. With 14 million tonnes of steel from cars being scrapped each year, contributing to an industry-wide total of 76 million tonnes of recycled steel and iron, it is easy to see that auto recycling is a multibillion dollar industry."

Buffalo News explaining the crushing process during the recycling says, "Once cars are crushed, they're shipped off to a recycling centre where they are shredded and separated into small pieces, which are then sorted into various metals.

"The largest shredder in the world is used by Sturgis Iron & Metal of Elkhart, Indiana. The machine is so big that it is not measured in tonnes, but acres. It uses an 8,000-horsepower electric motor to drive a massive rotor that spins hammers at 175 mph, reducing six pre-crushed cars per minute into fist-sized metal chunks. The shredder is so powerful, the hammers must be turned or replaced almost daily because of the wear and tear they receive. And it sits on special dampeners to prevent seismic vibrations in the surrounding area."

Recycling a junk car was not only good for the environment, it could also be good for a person's wallet and soul, said suite101.com.

It also described it as a win-win situation that could be done just by flipping through the phone book and making a few calls.

In some parts of Europe, it said many part yards had certain parts needs and would be willing to offer more money for a car with those parts.

"If the owner isn't worried about profit and would rather donate a vehicle to a good cause, checking out charities would be a good choice. Many charities have started tow-away programmes for old cars. These programmes help to make money for the needy. Car angles, Cars for Causes, and Give Cars are all good websites for more information on car donations for charity," it said.

Gbassa also expressed the hope that in a matter of years, Nigeria would have imbibed the auto recycling culture where cities would devote a clean-up day to haul away junk cars for free.

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