

SWMCOL CEO laments challenges in tyre disposal

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THE disposal of used tyres is a worrying situation in this country, with one million tyres in circulation every year, according to the chief executive officer of the Solid Waste Management Company Ltd (SWMCOL), Sean De Souza.

However, he stated that solutions are being explored for proper disposal.

The question of the proper disposal of used tyres was posed at the Parliament's Public Administration and Appropriation Committee meeting on Wednesday.

'We are still not where we want to be. It is an issue that we are very worried about. I have approximately 6,000 tyres. When I look at my transfer station which is just south of the market and that is a fire hazard, so we are looking at opportunities. There are two other people in Trinidad and Tobago who are basically trying to rework the tyres industries and even they are having issues with capacity, so we need to choose how we are doing it. As I said, we need to get multiple channels,' De Souza told the committee.

He pointed out the hazards involved in the improper disposal of used tyres saying there are 'one million tyres every year that are coming into circulation. You also have to look at what you do with the tyre and what makes sense rather than just chipping it up.

Unfortunately, there is a fact that once we put tyres in to a landfill, whether we chip it becomes a fire hazard and a major contaminant at that.'

Explaining to the committee the options that are being explored for used tyres, De Souza said: 'So right now, there are two options that have been proposed because we need to chip these one million tyres per year at small bites to digest it, so we have to look at the technology, so recently through UTT (University of Trinidad and Tobago) they found a way where they literally separating the three materials out of the tyres and making tyre crumb and now that is being incorporated as a 2% into paving roads.'

He added that the 'study should be finalised and tested and completed by January or February this year, so we can see is it acceptable but it has been practiced in other countries in the world, it is just the first time that we are doing it here.'

He said further that there is a need to look at 'what are we going to do with the material the infrastructure for the machinery to be able to deal with this because if you don't deal with it properly it could become another direction of moving a problem one place to the next'.

Additionally, he said, 'there were opportunities where we are exploring where these tyres could have been used retaining walls above ground and trying to sustain in low budget areas on and how we could reuse it'. However, he said while there are