



Professor Josef Konvitz of Pascal International Observatory addresses delegates during the Municipal-University Engagement Workshop hosted by Unisa.

PICTURE: MASI LOSI

The do's and don'ts of service delivery

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METRO REPORTER

SERVICE delivery protests are a global problem and not unique to South Africa, the Municipal-University Engagement Workshop held at the University of South Africa heard yesterday.

The conference was hosted by the Pascal International Observatory, City of Tshwane and the university to discuss issues pertaining to the effective functioning of municipalities.

Professor Josef Konvitz, a public governance and economic and social development specialist at Pascal, said protests happened because people felt powerless by having to rely on others for change.

They subsequently resorted to protests,

after which governments often reacted by doing what they did best – delivering services, the academic said.

Konvitz said municipalities should focus on early detection of problems rather than being reactive.

“If people pollute a river the instinct is to build a large water purification plant.

“However, you can influence change in behaviour that will ensure the same people do not throw litter in the river,” he said.

In his address, City of Tshwane mayor Kgosietsso Ramokgopa told participants at the workshop the capital was facing challenges such as globalisation, climate change, growing population, changing geopolitics, changing economic structures and social ills such as poverty, inequality, HIV/Aids and tuberculosis.

Universities – and there were three in the city – and governments were equally charged with an obligation to serve the community by resolving these problems.

“This can be achieved by bringing to the market innovations that can improve lives and change our communities for the better,” said the mayor.

“In our quest to be an African capital city of excellence we are of the firm view that collaboration with universities is a critical ingredient towards us achieving excellent service delivery.”

Ramokgopa said academic institutions were well qualified to develop new knowledge and creative solutions to assist in ensuring sustainable development through good governance.

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