

Of the 11,000 tons of trash per day, some can be used to produce energy



UNSUSPECTING SANITATION WORKERS: Young Afghan refugee ragpickers hold garbage bags as they walk along a street in Karachi on Monday. Boys like these are instrumental to keeping the city clean. PHOTOS: AFP

Energy campaign underway to chalk out plan for solid waste management

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The 20 million people in Karachi produce over 11,000 tons of solid waste a day but picking up and throwing away house and factory garbage is not a solution to pollution.

Instead, we need a proper

system to use the trash productively — to produce energy through recycling, according to the City District Government Karachi (CDGK) municipal services EDO.

A cleanliness campaign, which is underway, is a step in the right direction to understand how to tackle solid waste management but it would take at least 15 days to assess how to deal with the problem, said the EDO.

The campaign shows that the production of the solid

waste has increased by at least 1,500 tons but an exact figure will be quoted once the work ends.

The Karachi district coordination officer has assured the municipal services department that it will get the Rs50 million it needs to comprehensively study and come up with a programme to convert waste into energy.

Solid waste, including copper, iron and other metals, can be used to produce en-

PRODUCTIVE TRASH

Rs50

million is the amount required for a study and programme to convert waste into energy

ergy. Trash pickers sell what they find to scrap mongers but a little sifting can put

this material and others to even better use.

If their efforts are harnessed, trash pickers can be employed by the government to separate the useful trash, such as metals, from the garbage thrown out by houses and industrial areas. "The lack of the management of waste is a big problem," explains NED University of Engineering and Technology Prof. Dr Noman Ahmed.

The National Forum for

Environment's Naeem Qureshi suggested that environmental organisations can work together on reducing Karachi's solid waste generation.

According to Qureshi, a door-to-door campaign could help guide residents on how to separate their trash. Experts should tell people to keep useful contents in a separate bag and recycle their trash so that productive waste can be used for organic fertiliser and energy.