Minister drives Thuma Mina call for a cleaner SA

Molewa urges South Africans to heed President’s call in environment sector

Minister of the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) Edna Molewa encouraged South Africans to exercise small consumer actions such as avoiding single-use plastic goods to assist in eradicating plastic pollution in the country.

Responding to the Presidential Thuma-Mina initiative, the department will be launching the Keep South Africa Clean campaign to mobilise each citizen to become environmentally conscious. “We want to see a South Africa free of litter and illegal dumping. The main purpose of this campaign is to change attitudes and behaviour towards waste, and enable people to take responsibility for keeping their communities clean,” said Molewa.

Marking this year’s international World Environment Day themed “Beating Plastic Pollution”, governments, industries, communities and citizens are urged to unite in exploring sustainable alternatives to speedily reduce the production and excessive use of single-use plastic products.

Her call comes after the department’s budget vote speech last month, where minimising plastic pollution was prioritised.

Out of a range of measures to curb plastic pollution, the department was in consultation with the cosmetics industry as part of an attempt to phase out the use of microbeads in the production of cosmetics.

“Plastic pollution is particularly insidious because once plastics enter the environment, they do not biodegrade, they simply break down into smaller pieces over time,” the minister said.

The DEA is looking to introduce a range of measures to curb plastic pollution. These will be aligned with recommendations of a plastic material flow study undertaken by the department. The study, in line with the resolutions taken at the UN General Assembly (UNGA) and the UN Environmental Assembly (UNEA), showed that only 21% of plastic waste is recycled.

It recommended among other issues, that plastic must be collected and removed at source.

The DEA, the Department of Trade and Industry and its agencies, the South African Bureau of Standards, the National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications and the National Treasury will be reviewing the implementation of the country’s plastic bag policies.

Minister of Environmental Affairs Edna Molewa participates in a clean-up operation as part of a campaign to encourage all South Africans to do their part to combat plastic pollution, including sustainable recycling options.

However, the department will continue to work with the packaging sector – paper, glass, plastic and metal – to increase over and above 58% the amount of waste diverted from landfills.

“This has a detrimental effect on our environment, more so once this pollution enters our oceans and endangers marine life and fragile marine ecosystems,” said the minister.

Minister drives Thuma Mina call for a cleaner SA

#BeatPlasticPollution

How you can help?

- Carry a reusable water bottle
- Bring your own shopping bag
- Skip the plastic produce bags
- No to disposable straws and cutlery
- Pack lunches in reusable containers
- Bring your own cup

THUMA MINA FOR A GREENER, CLEANER SA
Read more to find out how you can make a positive difference to our environment. www.environment.gov.za call centre: 086 111 2468
Thuma Mina – Green Deeds

Projects support the environment


The campaign aims at changing attitudes and behav- iour towards waste and envi- ronment in general and to unify all citizens to take re- sponsibility for keeping their communities clean.

Molewa said the Phakisa waste economy, which is led by her department and the De- partment of Cooperative Gov- ernance and Traditional Af- fairs, has potential to address poverty alleviation, inequality and create jobs.

The department manages several programmes aimed at waste minimisation through the 4 Rs – recovery, reduce, reuse and recycling.

The Recycling Enterprise Support Programme (RESP) was one such programme that was in line with the objectives of the national waste manage- ment strategy. Through the programme, the department provides developmental fund- ing for projects in the form of start-up grants. Those projects are either start-up or pre-exist- ing enterprises which include buy-back centres, material re-covery facilities, construction and demolishing solutions as well as plastic palletisation plants.

The RESP programme was allocated a budget of R194 mil- lion over a three-year period and has now made a material impact to the lives of 12 black-owned management enterprises.

“President Ramaphosa has through the Thuma Mina Ini- tiative, affirmed the need for us to take charge of our own destinies as citizens; and I en- courage all sectors of society to own hands to keep SA clean,” said Molewa.

In response to the Presiden- tial Thuma-Mina initiative, the department will also be launching the Keep South Africa Clean campaign, to mob- ilise citizens to become envi- ronmentally conscious.

Meanwhile, the country had adopted the entire month of June to heighten awareness of environmental issues since it marked the World Environ- ment Day, which is commem- orated annually on June 5.[15] World Oceans Day and the World Day to Combat Deserti- fication are also celebrated in the same month.

Thuma Mina – Green Deeds

Focus on tackling plastic pollution

SA launches anti-litter campaigns

By Sandra Luiz

Marine pollution is now con- sidered to be in the same league as some of the world’s most pressing environmental challenges such as climate change. Over 300 million tons of plastic litters the oceans, with an average of 5 million tons added each year.

This year’s World Oceans Day focuses on plastic polli- nation, in particular, marine pollution, which is also the biggest challenge in South Africa as over 80% of all ma- rine litter is composed of plastic.

According to a 2015 inter- national research, SA’s oceans have between 90,000 and 250,000 tons of litter each year, which harms ma- rine life.

Challenges in plastic litter:

1. Combustion: communities do not have the facilities or means to dispose of waste, leaving waste items to be taught that wealth can be earned from waste. It is important to educate com- munities about the benefits of recycling.
2. Routine 20% of used plastics in SA are recycled.
3. Municipalities and commu- nities must commit to im- proving the recycling rate.

Plastic recycling:

1. Working with the Coast Project removes litter and plastic from SA’s beaches.
2. The annual International Coastal Clean-up raises public awareness and en- courages litter collection.
3. Carefully sort your waste as only 31% of plastic waste is recycled.
4. The Cosmetics, Toi- lettries and Fragrance Asso- ciation of SA will voluntarily phase out plastic microbeads found in cosmetics.

Deputy Minister welcomes Unilever’s sustainable packaging commitment

Firm commended for its ‘green’ move

By Sandra Luiz

Deputy Minister of Environ- mental Affairs Barbara Thom- son has commended consumer goods company Unilever for their commitment to ensuring sustainability forms part of their business, after they unveiled the new Biomass Boiler in Durban.

The new environmentally-friendly Biomass Boiler, which was launched as part of World Environment Day (WED), uses sustainable fuel to reduce their electricity consumptions and carbon dioxide by 90%.

The R5-million boiler was un- veiled at Unilever’s Maydon Wharf Factory, after the signing of the packaging commitment, which resonates with the WED theme – Beat Plastic Pollution.

“I wish to commend our host, Unilever, for their commitment to make sustainability an inte- gral part of how they conduct their business. We appreciate their commitment to balance their vision to grow their busi- ness with the need for a smaller environmental footprint and greater positive social impact,” Thomson said.

The boiler is fuelled by wood- en pallets, waste wood and off- cuts from local manufacturers.

In a South African study of de- bris sampled along the country’s coastline, plastic items were found to be comprising 99% of coastal litter, the minister ex- plained. The Durban harbour, which was buzzing with colour- ful crabs and creatures, was in 2017 found with not a single crab in the section of mangroves.

“The reason? The biologically rich environment has been smothered by a thick layer of plastic and other litter. Further- more, recent studies by biology students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal found that sev- eral species of juvenile fish off the Durban coastline were growing more slowly and dying more frequently from eating micro- plastics.

“The crucial point about these findings is that if we do not do something urgently, the moun- tain of plastic waste will contin- ue to grow, resulting in a perma- nent contamination of marine ecosystems and our natural envi- ronment.”
Focus on marine life and ecosystem crisis needed as plastic waste clogs our oceans

By Sandra Luiz

On the occasion of World Ocean’s Day, Minister of Environmental Affairs Edna Molewa has urged South Africans to keep the country’s oceans and water systems clean and litter-free to fight marine pollution.

World Ocean’s Day is celebrated annually on June 8, after it was officially recognised by the United Nations in 2008. This year’s theme is “Prevent plastic pollution and encourage solutions for a healthy ocean”, as plastic is a worldwide problem affecting human health, marine and wildlife, and costs millions in wasted resources and revenue.

Research conducted in 2015 found that between 90 000 and 250 000 tons of litter enter the country’s oceans each year. To curb this, the department is engaging with key stakeholders to improve the collection of litter in areas within catchments, to prevent it from reaching the sea.

This includes the Source-2-Sea campaign, to be launched soon, to increase activities such as community-based waste-sorting and recycling. A National Pollution Laboratory has been established at the Walter Sisulu University in Eastern Cape, which will monitor water quality along the country’s coastline.

“It is important to tackle the problem of marine litter. Plastic products present a threat to marine life and threaten human health. We need to limit the use of plastic in our everyday lives and watch out on how we dispose of it,” Molewa said.

Globally, plastic and synthetic materials constitute the most of marine litter that cause the most problems for marine life. SA is a maritime nation surrounded by the Atlantic, Indian and Southern Oceans, which offer a resource-rich and biologically diverse environment.

About 40% of SA’s population lives within 10km of the coastline. Scientific research stations in the Antarctic and Subantarctic and the South Atlantic have produced numerous scientific research publications in areas such as climate research, oceanography, geology, botany, meteorology and space science.

South Africa has maintained a presence in the Antarctic and Subantarctic by establishing permanent research bases on Marion Island, Gough Island and in Antarctica.

The SA Agulhas II opened its doors to the public on its first open day experience on June 8-9.

“The SA Agulhas II was designed to be an ice-breaking research vessel to supply South African research stations in the Antarctic and Marion and Gough Islands,” said DEA Minister Edna Molewa.

The day gave the public an opportunity to walk aboard the ship and learn about the DEA’s work in oceans and coastal environment.

Every year the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) hosts about 2 000 people at its SA Agulhas II open day. This year it was Durban’s turn to explore the state-of-the-art research and polar vessel at the Port of Durban.

The event was observed under the theme: Preventing Plastic Pollution and Encouraging Solutions for a Healthy Ocean.

“It is important to remember that we need to tackle the problem of marine litter at source,” said DEA Minister Edna Molewa.

Members of the public signed their pledge to do their bit to stop plastic pollution.

World Ocean’s Day experience

By Gaopoalewe Moroane and Tshego Letsibwiti

As part of World Ocean’s Day, the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) held exhibits at the Durban Harbour and on its research vessel, the SA Agulhas II, from June 8-9.

The event was observed under the theme: Preventing Plastic Pollution and Encouraging Solutions for a Healthy Ocean.
SA’s IIOE II voyage set to enhance research and training

**Expedition is a voyage of scientific discovery for SA**

*By Thabeg Letshwiti*

The Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) internship programme entered into its second year of participation in the International Indian Ocean Expedition (IIOE2), as part of SA’s training and capacity building voyage.

The second voyage started on June 16 and will end on July 25, where a total of 46 stations (stops made to assess the ocean and its inhabitants) will be completed at the end of the research cruise, having covered the Indian Ocean and its influence on the climate and its marine ecosystem.

The IIOE2 is a multi-national programme of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) which emphasises the need to research the Indian Ocean and its influence on the climate and its marine ecosystem.

The ICO recognised that there was a persistent lack of basic long-term environmental information in the Indian Ocean, particularly for developing countries surrounding the Indian Ocean. As a result, the IOC decided to declare the beginning of the IIOE2, 50 years after the first IIOE.

After collecting this very important initiative in the Indian Ocean, particularly for developing countries surrounding the Indian Ocean, the ICO decided to declare the beginning of the IIOE2, 50 years after the first IIOE.

The IC also recognised the need for research voyages in the waters of Tanzania, Comoros, S A and many other islands.

SA has also committed to this very important initiative with research voyages in our own waters of the Indian Ocean.

The IIOEII voyage is amongst the initial steps taken towards a region wide coordinated research effort which is aimed at better conservation management of common species between the Indian Ocean nations in Africa. One such species is the migratory humpback whale, which occurs in the waters of Tanzania, Comoros, SA and many other islands.

SA has also committed to this very important initiative with research voyages in our own waters of the Indian Ocean.

Students receive assistance from DEA bursary

**Department initiative bridges gap**

*By Nonkululeko Mazibuko*

According to a September report by Statistics South Africa, there are 10 million South Africans between the ages of 15 and 24, 54% of whom are unemployed.

Once they have completed their studies, the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) bursary holders are given the opportunity to serve through the department’s internship programme for a maximum of two years.

The DEA internship programme is in line with Department of Public Service & Administration’s initiative established in 2002, which seeks to bridge the gap between academic study and workplace performance.

Bursary recipients Thandekile Khumalo and Chulumanco Myntaza share how the DEA bursary has affected their careers.

Khumalo said, “I received the bursary in 2013 while I was doing my second year at university, and now I have completed my studies in Community and Development Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.”

Myntaza is also an intern in the Biodiversity and Conservation Branch under the sub-directorate of Transfrontier Protected Areas, that monitors compliance within transfrontier conservation areas. The DEA’s bursary programme opens each year before the end of October. The internship for the year 2018/2019 is advertised between November and December. For more information and application forms, visit: www.envi-ronment.gov.za
SPOTLIGHT ON: ENVIRONMENTAL CAREERS

Plenty of careers in environmental management to choose from
You can qualify via degree or diploma

By Nonkululeko Mazibuko

According to a September report by Statsics South Africa, there are a mininal South Africans between the ages of 15 and 24. of whom more than 20% are unemployed.

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Deputy Minister reaffirms anti-desertification goals

Invest in the future of land by protecting it now, warns Thomson

In celebration of World Day to Combat Desertification, Deputy Minister of Environmental Affairs Barbara Thomson has urged citizens to steer clear of unsustainable land use practices and invest in the future of land.

Recently addressing parliament during the department’s budget vote speech, Thomson said the country was committed to meeting goals for land degradation neutrality (LDN) as agreed by parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

“Through the LDN targets, South Africa aims to achieve a balance between anticipated land degradation and planned positive actions in order to achieve, at least, a position of neutrality in relation to other sustainable development goals on water, food and poverty,” Thomson said.

“Equally important is our preparedness to confirm the goal on land degradation neutrality in relation to other sustainable development goals on water, food and poverty.”

According to the 2015 Economics of Land Degradation report, the annual loss of 75 billion tons of soil from arable land will cost $100-billion (about R5.4-trillion) a year globally, while taking action against soil erosion over 20.5 million hectares will save up to $62.4-billion in net present value over the next 15 years.

But enhancing carbon stocks through agricultural soils alone can create potential value on the carbon market from $66 to $180-billion annually. Productive and healthy land can bring not only environmental and social solutions, but also economic gain.

Sustainable land management (SLM) practices, measures or initiatives, is a wise investment for economic growth that does not compromise resilient livelihoods.

“It is also a key to safeguarding and managing the quality of the land by balancing its biological and economic potential,” Thomson said.

“Moreover, land plays a vital role in linking multiple sustainable development goals by harnessing synergies while minimising potential conflicts and trade-offs. SLM can give tremendous momentum to positive change.”

Investing in land for sustainable production

The World Day to Combat Desertification (WDCD) is an annual celebration aimed at promoting public awareness on desertification, land and drought susceptibility and their significance as a threat to national climate change adaptation policies.

Changes in behaviour and adoption of efficient planning and practices can provide sufficient land resources and sustainable livelihoods.

Since land is being used as an infinite resource, it contributes to the livelihood, a role which is often ignored. This negligence threatens food and water supply, biodiversity and even human security.

Most rural communities experience challenges brought by severe temperatures and drought.

The 2018 WDCD focuses on raising awareness on the importance of investing on land, its benefits and the role it plays in everyday lives. It reminds the world that land is a tangible valuable asset.

What are the key messages for the 2018 World Day to Combat Desertification?

- Farmers should be encouraged to invest in smart agriculture that leads to higher yields and a reduction in inputs.
- Policy-makers and land managers should support bio-economy by investing in new and traditional sustainable land management technologies and processes.
- Consumers should spend their money on organic and fairly traded products to avoid land degradation.
- Call for the inclusion of land and soil and their significance in food security into national climate change adaptation policies.
- Changes in behaviour and adoption of efficient planning and practices can provide sufficient land resources and sustainable livelihoods.

The WDCD calls upon producers, consumers, communities and policy makers, to utilise land in a sustainable manner.

Land care and unemployment amongst poor and unskilled South Africans, are amongst the matters addressed by government’s cross-cutting Expanded Public Works Programme.

Land care and unemployment amongst poor and unskilled South Africans, are amongst the major concerns in government’s mission to reverse desertification.
Sello Phuroe explained to learners about careers available in the environment sector and creating awareness of environmental issues at the South African Children’s Book Fair at Ticketpro Dome in Randburg. Learners were intrigued by different national parks and botanical gardens that can be explored through SANParks and SANBI. Parents and teachers also gained insight into what the DEA does and how they can work together to spread awareness on environmental issues.

Learners from different schools around Gauteng learnt about conserving the environment and their roles therein.

/VERONICA MAHLABA

Young ones learn about conservation

Empowerment in education

Deputy Minister of Environmental Affairs Barbara Thomson handed over school uniforms to underprivileged learners from 12 different schools as part of Youth Month celebrations in Pietermaritzburg on June 18. Image by Veronica Mahlaba
The late icon’s 100-year celebrations to also commit to conservation

Minister of Environmental Affairs Edna Molewa had committed to advancing policies to protect the environment in commemoration of 100 years since the birth of the father of the nation, the late Nelson Mandela.

The centenary celebrations, themed “Be the legacy”, aimed to promote Mandela’s ethos of unity despite race, orientation and gender. The celebrations coincide with the centenary celebrations of the late stalwart and struggle icon Albertina Sisulu.

Before addressing the 2018/2019 budget for the department, the minister acknowledged the milestones in the country’s political life.

“Tata Mandela’s love for nature was well-known, and it is in his honour that we commit ourselves to advance policies to conserve our environment,” Molewa said.

In August last year, an inter-ministerial committee was established to plan for celebrations of the Mandela centenary, working in close collaboration with the Nelson Mandela Foundation.

As the country celebrates the icon, government has urged South Africans to “Be the legacy” as the intention of the theme is to foreground characteristics and values which Mandela was renowned for across the world: integrity, passion, service, transparency, respect and transformation.

“These stalwarts will forever be remembered for their contribution to our liberation and beyond,” Molewa said.

The celebrations will extend across the continent and the world. Speaking at the unveiling of the Unilever Sustainable Packaging Commitment earlier this month, Deputy Minister of Environmental Affairs Barbara Thomson said citizens should continue to build a society envisaged by Mandela.

“The 100-year anniversary of the lives of these two remarkable people is an opportunity to recommit ourselves to their principles by building the nation we envisioned at the start of our democracy: a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic country built on the principle of environmental sustainability,” Thomson said.

Meanwhile, South Africans are encouraged to take part in the upcoming Mandela Day, on the late icon’s birthday July 18, to exhibit their respective initiatives inspired by the values of the global icon.