

## Minister's message

I am pleased to present to you the second South Africa Environment Outlook, a concise and all-encompassing overview of the state of the environment in South Africa. The South Africa Environment Outlook is published according to the provisions of the National Environment Law Second Amendment Act (No 30 of 2013) and is the successful culmination of an extensive research and consultative process.

The publication of this report offers an opportunity to acknowledge our successes, assess and measure the goals we have set and, where necessary, adjust and realign policies and activities that are not achieving the desired goals.

A number of significant events have taken place in the intervening years since work first commenced on the South Africa Environment Outlook.

In 2011, South Africa's National Planning Commission released the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030. This is the country's long-term plan to eliminate poverty, reduce inequality, grow an inclusive economy and enhance the overall capability of the state and its leaders to work together to solve the challenges facing South Africa.

A prominent feature of the NDP is South Africa's transition to an environmentally sustainable, climate change resilient, low-carbon economy and just society.

In 2015, the international community, including South Africa, adopted the 17 global Sustainable Development Goals, an ambitious new post-2015 transformational agenda to address and integrate the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

In the same year, parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) adopted the Paris Agreement to address and deal with the impacts of climate change.

Balancing environmental protection with economic development, and with it, the betterment of the lives of our people, remains at the core of all the South African government's policies.

The second South Africa Environment Outlook outlines the commendable and effective outcomes of our environmental management policies and practices, and at the same time, offers an examination of lessons learned from those that have not yielded similar success.

South Africa's extensive natural resource base remains largely intact across many parts of the country, despite the slight degradation. This presents a number of opportunities for conservation, land-use and sustainable utilisation initiatives, to name but a few.

On the issue of air quality, the South Africa Environment Outlook notes that the quality of our air continues to improve. The use of ozone-depleting substances such as chlorofluorocarbons and carbon tetrachloride has been phased out since 2010. We are also working on reducing the use of hydrochlorofluorocarbons and methyl bromide every year.

With regard to regulatory matters, a comprehensive environmental regulatory regime centred on Environmental Impact Assessments, environmental management permits, and compliance and enforcement has been established and is fully operational.

This second South Africa Environment Outlook was developed through the use of impact mapping tools. It is a long-term, explorative, cross-cutting assessment of key global mega-trends that have implications for the South African environmental policy context, and the country's ability to manage natural resources in a sustainable manner.

We have chosen to assess our multiple environmental management interventions against the following key areas or 'tipping points': water, land degradation, greenhouse gas emissions, and non-renewable resources.

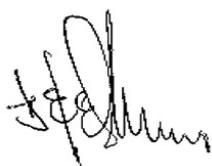


The second South Africa Environment Outlook forecasts the following areas of interest for the immediate future:

- The Food-Water-Energy Nexus - and potential areas of conflict with regard to the provision of these resources;
- Renewable Energy and Changing our Energy Mix - although South Africa has made significant progress in the acquisition of renewable energy, a dramatic scaling up is required if we are to meet our energy needs;
- Green Economy - advancing the green economy will mean reducing economic activities with unsustainable environmental impacts, and adopting more sustainable activities that have job creation and poverty alleviation benefits; and,
- Ecological infrastructure - this refers to naturally functioning ecosystems delivering valuable services such as water and climate regulation, soil formation and disaster risk reduction. Greater investment in ecological infrastructure has significant socio-economic development benefits.

These areas are in line with the South African government's Outcomes Approach, and in particular, Outcome 10, namely "*Environmental assets and natural resources that are well protected and continually enhanced*". A set of recommendations are made to address these potential terrains of contestation.

I trust that the second South Africa Environment Outlook will be a valuable resource for policy and decision-makers and for all South Africans who have a vested interest in ensuring the country progresses along a sustainable growth trajectory.



**Bomo Edith Edna Molewa**