

# ENVIRONMENT NEWS

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# PRESIDENT ZUMA APPLAUDS EPWP'S SKILLS TRANSFER

The Department of Environmental Affairs' firefighting programme employs more than 5000 personnel across 200 bases.

By Ernest Mulibana

PRESIDENT Jacob Zuma launched phase three of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) in Keiskammahoek (Eastern Cape) on Friday 3 October 2014, with various Cabinet ministers, the Eastern Cape Premier and provincial MECs, committing government to create six million job opportunities through the programme by 2019.

"The EPWP's aim is to ensure that a significant number of the unemployed are drawn into productive work and gain skills while they work. The programmes provide poverty and income relief through temporary work for the unemployed to carry out useful social activities. This is real work. Those involved have the possibility to acquire skills," President Zuma said.

The Department of Environmental Affairs' prestigious Working on Fire Programme (WoF) is one of the EPWP programmes that were showcased at the launch. Fire fighters formed a guard of honour at the arrival of the president and various ministers.

Launched in September 2003, the WoF Programme is a leading government job-creation and poverty alleviation programme which trains young people into becoming professional veld and



**USEFUL INITIATIVE:** President Jacob Zuma with the Minister of Environmental Affairs, Edna Molewa, Minister of Public Works Thulas Nxesi and Eastern Cape Premier Phumulo Masualle during the launch of phase three of the Expanded Public Works Programme in Keiskammahoek, Eastern Cape.

forest firefighters. The Programme has grown from its humble origins involving 25 teams (of 850 beneficiaries) and currently employs over 5000 personnel spread across 200 bases in all the provinces of South Africa. At least 29% of these personnel are females, the world's highest level of female participation in any firefighting service.

The WoF Programme has, over its 11 years of existence, by all accounts, been a resounding success, earning a number of awards, excelled in reaching its

published goals and transforming the lives of its beneficiaries and their families, beyond expectations.

As part of a process to reintegrate ex-offenders into society, the Department of Correctional Services has tasked the WoF Programme to play its part in the rehabilitation of ex-offenders. It is through this task that at least 17 parolees have been recruited and trained as firefighters.

It is through the WoF Programme that the DEA addresses the preven-

tion and control of wildland fires while enhancing the sustainability and protection of life, property and the environment through the implementation of Integrated Fire Management (IFM) practices.

**"At least 2000 fires have been extinguished throughout South Africa since June this year."**

The WoF Programme also utilises a fleet of aerial-firefighting aircraft ranging from purpose-built Dromader water bombers to helicopters and fixed wing spotter

planes, that act as vital "eyes in the sky" communicating with the ground-based wildland fire-fighting crews. In addition, Working on Fire has a highly specialised land-transport fleet which is used to deploy ground fire-fighting crews and resources into fire hotspots.

At least 2000 fires have been extinguished throughout South Africa since June this year. The WoF team is prepared to fight fires during the forthcoming fire season in the Western Cape in particular.



environmental affairs

Department:  
Environmental Affairs  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA





# MOVING SOUTH AFRICA FORWARD THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMMES

The Department of Environmental Affairs' 14 focus areas have created jobs and equipped many people with much-needed skills.



**BRIGHT FUTURE:** Pupils sit on the high-quality, durable and solid-wooden school desks made out of biomass from cleared Invasive Alien Plants, manufactured through the Working for Water Eco-Furniture Programme.

By Tshego Letshwiti

SOUTH Africa is faced with the ongoing challenge of unemployment and destitution. However, government has made significant strides in alleviating these problems. The Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) in this regard has heeded the call to fight the plight of unemployment and poverty particularly amongst the youth, women and people with disabilities, through the implementation of government's Expanded Public Works Programme in the environment sector.

As part of its bid to fast-track the alleviation of unemployment and poverty, the DEA has 14 main focus areas each with specific projects and mandates to be fulfilled. Each of these focus areas has not only over the years created jobs but has equipped many South Africans with much-needed skills and career development in the work sector.

The focus areas are unpacked as follows:

## Working for Energy (Biomass-Energy)

The initiative promotes optimal use of biomass cleared through the Working for Water programme, in creating work opportunities to generate energy. The programme also promotes the general use of biomass through biogas digesters, in providing energy and jobs to the poor in rural areas.

## Eco-Furniture Programme

The Eco-Furniture Programme seeks to make optimal use of the biomass cleared through the Working for Water programme, in creating work opportunities to make products that help Government meet its needs with particular emphasis on the needs of disadvantaged schools, by producing products such as school desks, benches and other furniture. Furthermore this programme aims to build on a large range of products as possible by meeting the needs of hospitals, clinics, community centres and other government service centres.

## Greening and Open Space Management

The programme aims to encourage greater use of the open spaces and to encourage healthy lifestyles in all

communities by managing open spaces sustainably. Its objective is to restore, enhance and rehabilitate open spaces. It further focuses on improving climate change adaptation through minimising biodiversity loss; and encouraging use of greener technologies to mitigate against environmental degradation.

## People and Parks

This programme invests in infrastructure development and biodiversity conservation for economic benefits by ensuring that local communities are involved in the management of protected and surrounding areas, by promoting biodiversity values in the proclaimed protected and surrounding areas.

## Wildlife Economy

A key focus area of this programme is investing in infrastructure development and biodiversity conserva-



**PROGRESS:** Working for the Coast Programme.

tion that ensures participation and sustainable beneficiation of communities.

## Working for Water

The Working for Water programme endeavours to improve the integrity of natural resources by preventing the introduction of new invasive species; and, management of the impact of established invasive alien species. This is achieved through

integrated prevention and control methods, and supported by the use of incentives, disincentives, advocacy and research. The programme further addresses problems of water security quantity and quality, and impediments to its use, including structural damage, thermal pollution and eutrophication.

## Working on Fire

The programme aims to enhance the sustainability and protection of life, livelihoods, ecosystem services and natural processes through integrated fire management. In doing so it has developed capabilities in contributing resources through providing services to co-ordinating fire management interventions in order to optimize the use of resources and empowering communities affected by fire, inter-alia.

## Working for Wetlands

The programme seeks to protect, rehabilitate and enhance the sustainable use of South Africa's wetlands. The programme's philosophy is underpinned by the following interlinked pillars: rehabilitation; communication, education, participation and awareness; and applied research and building capacity.

## Working for Ecosystems

Is aimed at restoring the composition, structure and function of degraded land, thereby enhancing ecosystem functioning, such as carbon sequestration, water regulation and purification, by reducing environmental risks. It also improves the sustainability of livelihoods and productive potential of land, and promotes economic empowerment in rural areas.

## Working for Land

The programme aims to rehabilitate degraded land using indigenous as well as advanced technologies to increase its performance in terms of production. This will improve on ecosystems, better water yields, quality and reduce environmental risks. Working for Land also seeks to address the issues of poverty through job creation by implement-

ing various natural resource rehabilitation and conservation projects.

## Working for Forests

The programme promotes the conversion of invading alien plant stands, and degraded Category B and Category C state forests, into usable resources for meeting basic community needs as well as sustainable forestry land use practices.

## Working on Waste

This programme's main objective is to create and support mechanisms for the protection of the environment and create sustainable livelihoods through recycling of waste collection & minimisation. It also supports the use of environmentally friendly waste disposal technology.

## Working for the Coast

The programme's main objective is the rehabilitation of the coastal environment, including but not limited to dunes and estuaries. Cleaning up of the coastline in general and beaches in particular, upgrading and maintaining facilities and infrastructure along the coast and facilitating access to the coastline without compromising the environment.

## Youth Environmental Services (YES)

YES aims to develop practical skills that are needed in the environment and conservation sector, as well as developing high self-esteem and sense of self-worth in the youth, whilst instilling a sense of responsibility and accountability through service in the environment sector and providing opportunities to enter the job market in the environment and conservation.



**Working for Land beneficiaries building a water pathway.**



**UNIT:** Building Green Parks for communities through the programme.



**APPEALING:** Clearing alien and invasive vegetation within communities.



**TOGETHER AS ONE:** A group of Working on Fire Programme beneficiaries in the Western Cape.





**OPEN SPACES:** The Deputy Minister of Environmental Affairs, Barbara Thomson (left) and Nkomazi Local Municipality Mayor Clr. TS Khoza (middle) and a councillor during the Masibekela Recreational Park launch.

## MASIBEKELA RECREATIONAL PARK BRINGS JOY TO THE COMMUNITY

The project falls within the Greening & Open Space Management focus area of the department's EPWP initiatives.

By Ernest Mulibana & Tshego Letshwiti

IN OCTOBER 2014, the Deputy Minister of Environmental Affairs Barbara Thomson launched a R1-million worth Masibekela Recreational Park in the quaint Masibekela Village in the Nkomazi Local Municipality, Mpumalanga.

The Masibekela Recreational Project falls within the Greening & Open Space Management focus area of the department's EPWP initiatives. The objective of open space management is to establish eco-friendly open spaces that are safe, attractively designed, well managed for the benefit of all our communities. It is also to promote maximum use of alternative energy sources, green infrastructure and ecosystem services as well as ensuring that children and young people enjoy playing and leisure.

The project was started in 2011 with the development of pedestrian walkways, parking areas, braai facilities, solar-powered lights and an office block. The implementation of this park was a resounding success.

During its implementation stages, the project created work opportunities for 45 local people, among them 23 women, 18 youth and one person living with a disability. Furthermore, the department invested than R140-million for 15 projects across the province in 2009 and than R345-million was invested in the new funding cycle of 2014. As a result, a total of 2 163 jobs have been created as well as important environmental protection and conservation infrastructure has been built.

This outstanding achievement in

just one province provides a mere glimpse into how much the department has accomplished in alleviating unemployment and poverty throughout the country.

As the country celebrates 20 years of Environmental Management and Protection, Environmental Protection and Infrastructure Programme (EPIP) continues to fight against unemployment and poverty by striving to move South Africa forward through its esteemed projects across the country.

***"The objective of open space management is to establish eco-friendly open spaces that are safe, attractively designed and well managed."***

The beneficiaries of the project have received training opportunities equipping them with the necessary

skills that will enable them to find employment in other work environments.

Moreover, the project has contributed to the development of local small business enterprises. Such small businesses have been used in providing services such as protective clothing, training, and supply of materials and equipment.

In her keynote address Deputy Minister Thomson told the community that the department had heeded the call to fight the ongoing challenge of unemployment in the country.

"In our pledge to move this province forward, the department has invested a total funding of more than R140-million for 15 projects across the province in 2009. An additional R345-million was invested in the

new funding cycle of 2014. As a result, a total of 2 163 jobs have been created, as well as important environmental protection and conservation infrastructure has been built," she said.

The Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), through the EPIP, funds the implementation of many other environmental projects in Mpumalanga. These projects are aimed at alleviating poverty and improve people's lives while protecting the natural resources.

The projects are implemented according to the employment prescripts of government's EPWP, which uses labour-intensive methods targeting unemployed youths, women, people with disabilities and Small to Medium Size Enterprises (SMMEs).

## CREATING SUSTAINABLE JOBS THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAMME



**SHOULDERS TO THE WHEEL:** The main objective of the EPIP programme is to alleviate poverty through a number of community interventions to uplift households.

By Ernest Mulibana

MORE than 10 years ago the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) started to implement programmes aimed at conserving natural assets and protecting the environment.

Since its inception in the 1999/2000 financial year the Environmental Protection and Infrastructure

Programme (EPIP) has greatly evolved and flourished, starting with a budget of R28-million in 1999 to the current R880-million for the 2014/15 financial year.

The main objective of the EPIP programme is to alleviate poverty through a number of interventions that are implemented in communities to uplift households, particularly those headed by women while

empowering beneficiaries to participate in the mainstream economy in a manner that addresses the environmental management challenges facing South Africa.

The programme's mandate is to manage the identification, planning and implementation of programmes that mirror and support the mandate of the department, while at the same time creating much-needed job opportunities.

The focus areas for this programme are: Working for Land; Working for the Coast; Working on Waste; People & Parks; Wildlife Economy; Greening and Open Space Management; and Youth Environmental Service.

***"Over the years, the programme created an average of 18 553 jobs annually."***

Over the years, the programme created an average of 18 553 jobs

annually with a total of more than 250 000. These jobs are accompanied by skills development in a form of both accredited and non-accredited training provided to beneficiaries as one of the objectives of the programme.

In addition, 101 139 Full-time Equivalents (FTEs) were created, and 5 858 Small Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) have participated on the programme.

The proportions of women, youth and disabled beneficiaries employed on the projects have exceeded EPIP set targets for 2013/2014 financial year of 60% youth, 55% women and 2% people with disabilities.

The Working on Waste project focuses on waste collection, disposal and recycling initiatives. The Working for the Coast project focuses on the initiatives geared towards cleaning and rehabilitation

of coastal environmental assets and infrastructure. People and Parks projects mainly centres on initiatives geared towards development of environmental assets and infrastructure within protected areas.

The Wildlife Economy focuses on fair access and equitable sharing of benefits arising from bio-prospecting involving indigenous biological resources. Greening and Open Space Management focuses on the establishment of community parks and rehabilitation of open spaces.

Working for Land projects concentrate on restoration, rehabilitation and re-vegetation of degraded areas outside the protected areas.

The Youth Environmental Services focuses on recruitment and participation of youth in training, community services and placement into work and training opportunities.



By Staff Writer

GROWING up in the rural village of Cala (approximately 50km from Queenstown) in the Eastern Cape, Christine Mdunyelwa knew from an early age what hard work meant and that one day she wanted to provide the best for her family. As the youngest child in a family of five, she was always aware of just how difficult it was to earn a living.

"I started working as a contractor in the SANParks Working for Water Project in 2005. At the time I was unemployed and had no stable income, no vehicle, no experience and no equipment," Mdunyelwa says.

Today, at the age of 43, Mdunyelwa lives in the community of Masiphumelele in the Southern Peninsula in Cape Town, where she runs a successful small enterprise that employs more than 20 staff.

Mdunyelwa received much-needed training on a variety of skills provided through the Department of Environmental Affairs' Working for Water Programme. The skills she acquired through this training have undoubtedly helped her to run her business more efficiently. "When I started to work, I rented a vehicle and trailer, which helped to transport my team and the equipment provided through Working for Water," she says.

"With the skills I acquired through the Working for Water training, I realised that it would be financially more lucrative to purchase a vehicle

## EMPOWERING SMMEs MEANS CREATING MORE JOBS

The Working for Water Programme employs and provides training to the youths, people with disabilities and Small Medium and Micro Enterprises. Here is a story of *Christine Mdunyelwa*, one of the small enterprise owners who has benefited immensely from the programme.



**HARD WORK:** The alien invasive clearing team employed by Christine Mdunyelwa's enterprise contracted to the Working for Water Programme.

than to rent one. I, therefore, started saving up for this purpose. I continued to rent the vehicle for approximately 11 months. During this time I saved up all the income to be able to purchase a vehicle for my business. I was able to purchase a Nissan 1 Tonner with canopy and tow bar. I bought a trailer as well."

**"Through the contract I was able to employ a team of men and women to clear alien plants."**

The skills that Mdunyelwa acquired did not only help with purchase of vehicle and trailer, but also empowered her business that she even started tendering for other contracts outside the Working for Water project. Mdunyelwa was awarded a contract for Firebreaks by the City of Cape Town, enabling her to purchase even more assets for her business.

"Through the new contract, I was also able to employ a team of young

men and women to clear alien invasive plants in and around Table Mountain National Park (TMNP). I also have a team that specialises in the construction of gabion structures which prevent soil erosion."

Mdunyelwa is now known for the quality of work her enterprise provides and is able to tender for most of the Expanded Public Works Projects throughout the Cape Peninsula. Being one of the Contractor Representatives for the

Working for Water TMNP Southern Section, Mdunyelwa is involved in getting information from the PAC meetings back to the other contractors. She is a leader in her own right and is recognised as a community leader in her area.

"Without the help of Working for Water, I would not have been able to get where I am today. The key is planning, focus, management and hard work."

## DECENT WORK OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMMES



**LIFELINE:** A group of EPWP beneficiaries building a beach walkway.

By Tshego Letshwiti

THE growing rate of unemployment in South Africa is a great concern for the government and has prompted rapid action to be taken in alleviating poverty and unemployment in the country.

As part of an extensive plan to create decent jobs, the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) runs a number of Expanded Public Works Programmes (EPWP) that contribute towards addressing

unemployment and economic growth.

In 2004, government introduced EPWP to tackle our country's pressing socio-economic challenges, improve government performance and provide focus on service delivery. The aim of EPWP programmes is to draw a significant number of unemployed South Africans in a productive manner that will enable them to gain skills and increase their capacity to earn income.

This is done through job creation, skills development, and use of Small Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) while at the same time contributing to natural resource management and environmental protection. These initiatives are also aimed at striking a balance between the social, economic and environment for sustainable living.

A classic example is the Working on Fire programme that, in this financial year alone, created 4 409 jobs. By the end of January, the firefighters had fought 2 324 fires and a calculation done in the last financial year was that up to 85% of the firefighting capacity for wild fires in the Western Cape came from the Working on Fire programme.

According to Forestry SA, the impact of fires in 2007 on the forestry industry would have doubled - roughly by R3.6 billion - had it not been for the Working on Fire programme. This is a clear indication of the success and exceptional returns on investment this programme has had.

Another programme that has been prosperous is the Working for Water programme. It is the biggest programme among the EPWP Programmes within the environmental sector which addresses the

threat of alien invasive species in South Africa. In a bid to create more jobs while protecting the environment, the programme will clear more than one million hectares of land and create more than 30 000 jobs this financial year.

To date, the DEA has contributed more than 190 182 work opportunities for women and young people through the EPWP programmes. This achievement highlights the hard work and commitment towards improving the lives of South Africans for the better.

**"Our programmes play a dual role of creating employment opportunities while ensuring that we deliver on our mandate of protecting the environment."**

The Minister of Environmental Affairs, Edna Molewa, perfectly summed up the importance of the EPWP programme by highlighting the role it has played in restoring dignity among South Africans.

"Surveys conducted have indicated that the vast majority of beneficiaries see the experience as a platform on which to build and as a crucial lifeline to the dignity of earning a basic wage. Our programmes play a dual role of creating employment opportunities while ensuring that we

deliver on our mandate of protecting the environment," she said.

Beneficiaries of these programmes are recruited in a fair, transparent and equitable manner as prescribed by the EPWP policy framework. In this regard, the agencies implementing EPWP programmes on behalf of the DEA work with local municipalities, ward councils and traditional councils to source potential employees to the programmes.

DEA's Environmental Programmes continue to improve socio-economic benefits within the environmental sector, improve sector education and awareness, prevent and control invasive alien species, effectively manage waste, enhance compliance with environmental legislation and also provide training and employment for communities.

EPWP programmes in the environment sector are: Working on Fire; Working for Water; Working for Land; Working for Forests; Eco Furniture Programme; People and Parks; Working for Wetlands; Working for Ecosystem; Working for the Coast; Working on Waste; Working for the Coast; Youth Environmental Services (YES); Working for Energy; Wildlife Economy as well as Greening and Open Space Management.



# REIGNITING HOPE FOR EX-OFFENDERS

The Working on Fire Programme has recruited and trained 17 female parolees to work as firefighters in the Gauteng province.

The story of Maleeto Mabe



**SECOND CHANCE:** Maleeto Mabe prefers her new daring job as a firefighter.

By Parapara Makgahlela

A 21-YEAR-OLD Maleeto Mabe, a parolee beneficiary of the Working on Fire Programme, is the youngest crew leader in the programme in Gauteng. Mabe's name (Maleeto) means a journey. This is the story of her journey.

Mabe was only 15 years old when she was arrested. Due to the nature and extent of the crime committed, She had to serve jail time and therefore could not obtain her matric.

However, the arrest and jail time did not only help with rectification of Mabe's criminal conduct, but also made her realise that life has plenty to offer than criminal activities.

It was shortly after her release on parole that Mabe was recruited and trained as a firefighter. Her recruitment and training as a firefighter forms part of the Working on Fire's role in the rehabilitation of ex-offenders and convicts into society.

"I was really excited to have been given a second chance despite the stigma of a criminal record. I am able to think positively and leave negative remarks aside. I come from a poor background and I don't have basic education. A new person has been built inside me," she said.

Mabe began her firefighting career at the Bekkersdal base, which was subsequently closed down due to public service delivery protests in the area. "I thought that was the end of my golden opportunity. I was scared because no one has a job at home," she recalls.

As a result of the closure of the

## 'A new person has been built inside me.'

Bekkersdal base, Mabe and many other firefighters were moved to various bases across the country. She was deployed to Suikerbos Nature Reserve, Heidelberg, south east of Johannesburg, which is far from her family. "I was determined to break through the jail stigma. I agreed to the deployment. I was welcomed and supported by crew members at Suikerbos," she said.

*"She was happy and anxious at the same time because she didn't know what will happen at the academy."*

Shortly after joining the base, She was nominated to undergo an intensive "All Female Crew Leader" training course, which helps crew leaders deal with psychological and emotional challenges. In addition, the beneficiaries were trained to become motivated firefighters who are able to operate safely and efficiently in dangerous and unpredictable work environments.

She was happy and anxious at the same time because she didn't know what will happen at the academy. "The training course was physically and emotionally tough. At times I wanted to quit. But I realised I was carrying the hopes and future of my siblings back home," she explained. Mabe is one of the seven female crew leaders who successfully completed the course and recently graduated as a type two crew leader from the WoF Breakthrough Academy in Nelspruit.

"The training was tough and I thought I would not make it. I am glad I made it," said jubilant Mabe.

The story of Refilwe Kulwa



**BETTER CHANCE:** Being a firefighter has given Refilwe Kulwa a new fighting spirit.

By Parapara Makgahlela

"PRISON does not have kids. It is the communities that have kids, thus why we too need to get job opportunities" pleads a 45-year-old Refilwe Kulwa a mother of five, a recruited female parolee.

Kulwa is one of the 17 ex-offenders recruited and trained to become firefighters through the Department of Environmental Affairs' Working on Fire Programme.

As part of a process to reintegrate ex-offenders into society, the Department of Correctional Services is working together with the WoF Programme to rehabilitate former inmates in South Africa.

The WoF Programme has recruited 10 female parolees in Krugersdorp to be dispatched to different bases across Gauteng once they complete extensive firefighting training.

## 'It's a chance to change my life for the better.'

*"Parolees too are humans. They too need opportunities to make a leaving. Most institutions decline to employ parolees because of the stigma attached to ex-convicts."*

The parolees were from different correctional service centres across the Gauteng province.

They had to pass a physical fitness test by doing 2.4km run in 14 minutes, push-up and sit-ups.

Kulwa is from Moloto area, east of Pretoria, and had been jobless ever since she was released on parole.

"At least I have another opportunity to make a leaving and to change my life for the better. The physical fitness test was very hectic for me,

but I was prepared to face hurdles," she said.

"I am confident that with the stipend to be offered to me, if I pass medical check-up will definitely make a difference in my house. I will use the stipend to upskill myself, perhaps do drivers' license," she said.

Magata Mashifane of Correctional Service in the Gauteng region said that the recruitment of the parolees will help a lot in breaking the cycle of crime.

"Parolees too are humans. They too need opportunities to make a leaving. Most institutions decline to employ parolees because of the stigma attached to ex-convicts" said Mashifane.

She said that parolees have showed commitment to change by passing stringent physical fitness tests.

Magata said: "Working on fire programme should treat them (parolees) as firefighters not parolees. In that way reintegration and rehabilitation will be successful."

Working on Fire's general manager in Gauteng Avhasei Maswime said that the programme is able to give them a second chance in life.

"The opportunities will relieve the homes of the newly recruited female parolees from poverty," he said.

Maswime expressed jubilation that the Working on Fire programme is making a difference in the lives of stigmatised ex-convicts.



# WASTE PRESENTS JOB OPPORTUNITIES

The Department has contributed in the creation of work particularly for the unemployed youth with a tertiary education.

By Ernest Mulibana

DURING the delivery of the 2013/14 Budget Vote speech in Parliament, Environmental Affairs Minister Edna Molewa emphasised the department's concern over the growing number of unemployed young people in South Africa.

Scores of young people in South Africa are unemployed, some despite having achieved a tertiary education. In March 2006 youth unemployment was estimated at 50.3% for 14-24 year olds and 29.5% for 25-35 year olds. This is an untenable state of affairs and requires immediate attention by all organs of state as well the private sector.

***"Minister Molewa launched the Youth Jobs in Waste Programme that aims to create an estimated 3 577 jobs for SA youth."***

In response to the worrisome level of youth unemployment, the Minister Molewa launched the Youth Jobs in Waste Programme (YJW) that aims to create an estimated 3 577 jobs for South African youth.

The waste sector has been identified as one of the critical sectors, with the potential to contribute substantially to the generation of jobs within the green economy. It is in this light that the department is increasingly expanding its programmes in job creation and enterprise development programmes within the Waste sector. The current initiative is aimed at addressing youth unemployment in our country, in a sustainable manner.

The programme also aims to provide on-the-job training, continuous up-skilling, as well as enterprise development for the youth. An estimated 1000 job opportunities will



**CLEANING UP:** A group of youth beneficiaries for the Youth Jobs in Waste Programme.

be created by placing young people in municipalities as Landfill Site Assistants, Waste Collection Administrators and Environmental Awareness Educators.

Further work opportunities are being created in the construction activities associated with the building or erection of landfill site offices, ablution facilities, as well as weigh pad platforms at landfill sites across the country.

The YJW Programme responds significantly to the multiple needs of young people matric to assist municipalities in waste management. It enables them to access new opportunities for employment,

income generation, skills and personal development.

It is also expected that some of the young people recruited into the programme will move on to further their environmental careers, either in other employment sectors or become involved in business ventures.

***"The department has created a total of 772 jobs through the YJW programme in KwaZulu-Natal."***

Growing existing green economy sectors and advancement of job creation is at the centre of the programme as it is an integral part of the government's green economy

strategy. The programme also creates and supports mechanisms for the protection of the environment and sustainable livelihoods through collection and recycling of waste.

A total budget of R64 000 000 has been committed towards the implementation of the Jobs in Waste for Youth programme which is implemented over a year.

The target group for the programme is the youth with at least a matric level of education.

Further work opportunities will be created from the construction activities associated with the building and erection of landfill site

offices, ablution facilities as well as weigh-pad platforms at landfill sites across the country.

At the moment, the Department has created a total of 772 jobs through the YJW programme in KwaZulu-Natal in 50 municipalities of which 454 jobs are allocated to women. In addition, the DEA has committed more than R29 million for the implementation of a YJW project across 19 municipalities in Mpumalanga.

The project was launched in October 2014, and has employed 266 youth of which at least 172 are women while three are people living with disabilities.

## MTHATHA DAM INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT



**PICKING HER SPOT:** Mthatha Dam Tourism and Recreational facility during construction.

By Ernest Mulibana

THE Department of Environmental Affairs built and handed over a R29-million Mthatha Dam Tourism and Recreational Centre to the community in the King Sabata Dalindyebo (KSD) Municipality, Eastern Cape, earlier this year.

The centre, built on the banks of Mthatha Dam in the Nduli Luchaba Nature Reserve, boasts two conference halls that can accommodate up to 158 people. It also features a boardroom and a restaurant that caters for at least 150 people.

At least 431 people have been employed during the first and second phases of the project, while 300 others received training in

variety of skills including computer literacy.

***"At least 431 people have been employed during the first and second phases of the project."***

The Mthatha Dam Tourism and Recreational Centre is another project of the DEA's Environmental Protection and Infrastructure Projects that are implemented using labour-intensive methods as required by Expanded Public Works Programme.

The idea behind these projects is to fulfil the DEA's environmental mandate while at the same time creating opportunities for job creation, small business development and skills development.



# POVERTY ALLEVIATION THROUGH WORKING FOR WATER

**Celebrating 20 Years of Effective Environment Management and Protection.**



Working for Water beneficiaries clearing alien and invasive plants. The Department of Environmental Affairs uses the cleared alien invasive plants to manufacture furniture products at various Eco-Factories.

By Sivuyile Ngaba & Ernest Mulibana

THE Department of Environmental Affairs' Working for Water Programme is undoubtedly one of the most efficient and effective Expanded Public Works Programme in government. The Programme was initiated by the late former Minister of Water and Forestry, Professor Kadar Asmal, in 1995 to deal with water consuming alien invasive plants.

The Working for Water Programme, which was funded through the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), received an

initial budget of R25-million. Departments of Environment and Water Affairs have invested over R7.5-billion on the Working for Water Programme (WfW), which aims to control and contain invasive alien plants.

*"Since its inception in 1995, the programme has created an equivalent of more than 174 000 person years of employment."*

Since its inception in 1995, the Programme has created an equivalent of more than 174 000 person years of employment, and created employment opportunities to an

average of 26 000 people per year, with 54% of them being women.

It is through this programme that the DEA continues to play its meaningful role in improving the integrity of natural resources by preventing the introduction of new invasive species and management of the impact of established invasive alien species.

The programme seeks to control the problem of invasive alien species, and create work opportunities for previously unemployed people, especially from marginalised groups.

**Achievements of the programme:**

- Since its inception in 1995, the programme has cleared more than two million hectares of invasive alien plants.
- The programme has created the equivalent of more than 181 000 full-time jobs, and created employment opportunities to an average of 26 000 people per year, with 54% of them being women.
- It has provided jobs and training to more than 20 000 people from among the most marginalised sectors of society per annum.
- WfW currently runs more than 300 projects in all nine of South Africa's provinces.

At the launch of 2014 WeedBuster campaign in October, the Minister of Environmental Affairs Edna Molewa expressed jubilation at the success of the programme. "As the country celebrates 20 years of freedom and democracy this gives us an opportu-

nity as government to reflect on the success stories we have achieved in implementing programmes that make a difference on people's lives while saving the environment," she explained.

The WfW programme forms part of an overall integrated weed management programme, where biological control is seen working alongside traditional chemical and mechanical control methods.

*"The DEA has commissioned a strategy for Famine weed based on the aggressiveness and potential health risks."*

Though the department vigorously addresses the challenge of alien invasive species, the country is still threatened by this invading species, particularly famine weed *Parthenium hysterophorus* in KwaZulu-Natal.

Famine weed is one of the worst invasive species ever to have reached South Africa due to the detrimental effect it causes on agricultural production, biodiversity conservation, and human and animal health. It is a very fast-growing, rapidly-spreading annual plant that originates from the Americas.

Controlling famine weed in South Africa is not easy due to a wide network of tarred and dirt roads and tracks; high population density with low socio-economic status in many

areas that are climatically suitable to famine weed growth; and communal grazing and incorrect veld management practices. All these factors have created ideal conditions for famine weed invasion.

The DEA, however, continues to address these challenges and has commissioned a strategy to fight famine weed based on the aggressiveness and potential health risks on communities and animals and severe impact on agricultural land.

This strategy was developed in response to a growing concern from various sectors in South Africa about the severe impact of famine weed on people's livelihoods and the economy. It is hoped that this plan will significantly reduce the threat of famine weed to the biodiversity, society and economy of South Africa.

When it comes to improving South Africa's natural resources, government has delivered on its promise. Had it not been for this investment and the introduction of biological control, South Africa's biodiversity and, to some extent, food security could have been under severe threat.

In addition, more than 50 000 people, particularly from rural communities, have benefited through employment opportunities from the WfW.

# ECO-FURNITURE FROM INVASIVE ALIEN WOOD



**BUSY MEN:** Work under way at an eco-furniture factory.



**WONDERFUL:** A high-quality, durable and solid-wooden outdoor bench made out of biomass from cleared Invasive Alien Plants, manufactured through the Working for Eco Furniture Programme. The bench was manufactured in honour of the late Cabinet Minister Professor Kader Asmal.

By Sivuyile Ngaba

INVASIVE alien plants are a major threat to South Africa's economy, specifically affecting indigenous species of plants and animals, water supplies, the productive use of land, negatively affecting fire regimes, erosion and siltation and ultimately even human health.

Through the Working for Water

Programme, the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) has established eco-furniture factories to manufacture high-quality, durable furniture from the cleared invasive alien biomass. There are currently six eco-factories operating in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga.

This eco-furniture Programme is focusing on manufacturing school

desks and benches for disadvantaged schools while creating work opportunities for unemployed people, and in this manner addressing a key government service need.

*"Through the Working for Water Programme, the DEA has established eco-furniture factories to manufacture high-quality, durable furniture."*

A range of other possible products are also manufactured to deal with the chronic shortage of furniture in public facilities such as hospitals, clinics, community centres and other government service centres.

**Achievements of the Eco-furniture Programme:**

- The Eco-furniture Programme forms part of the stable of Environmental Programmes at DEA, which

has created almost 342 000 full-time jobs since 1995, with more than half of them employed being women and youth.

- Through the Department of Basic Education, the Eco-Furniture Programme has distributed more than 50 000 solid-wood, quality school desks, made by previously unemployed workers, out of wood from invasive alien plants.



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