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Top: Deputy Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Makhosho Magdeline Sotyru pictured with Chief Montoeil Tyrone Lehana during the handover of forestry plantations to the Batlokoa and Makhoba communities in the Eastern Cape. Bottom: The Lehana plantation, one of those handed over to community rule, this project is the first of its kind in South Africa.

**Social importance of forests**

Most forests occur around the rural areas of South Africa. Due to low job opportunities and underdevelopment in rural areas, most of people living in these areas are poor. Because of this, the rural people rely on the forest resources for their daily survival. They depend on forests for the following:

1. **Basic needs of survival** – many rural people depend on forests for their daily living:
  - Medicinal plants – traditional herbal medicines harvested from the forests for primary health care.
  - Poles - timber poles are used for building, fencing etc.



- Wild fruits and animals - they form an important source of nutrients and contribute to the food security of the rural households
  - Firewood – for cooking purposes
2. **Money saving** – the following options are created by forests:
    - Using medicinal plants instead of buying medicines from a pharmacy
    - Firewood instead of paying for electricity for cooking and heaters
    - Harvesting wild fruits instead of buying from supermarkets
  3. **During times of adversity** - rural communities often sell forest products to earn a daily living.



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# Multi-million waste fleet to wrestle municipal litter

**T**hrough its waste management fleet handover campaign, the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE) has literally taken the fight against litter to the road. The Department has used R42.4 million of its own budget to provide 22 vehicles to 19 municipalities that are battling unsightly litter across the country.

The vehicles include skip loader trucks, front end loaders, compactor trucks and other trucks required to transport waste within the municipal area.

“Our municipalities are struggling to provide regular and consistent waste collection services. Once dumpsites develop, these are not regularly cleared and a number of our landfills do not meet regulatory compliance standards,” says Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment Minister, Ms Barbara Creecy.

The National Waste Management Strategy was revised in 2020 and focuses on: improving household waste collection; diverting waste from landfills; promoting a circular economy and promoting community awareness of the effects of illegal dumping on their own health and on the environment.

“To improve waste management in municipalities, the department is assisting in the development of their integrated waste management plans, and training on sustainable waste management practices,” says Minister Creecy.

Among the greatest threats to the health of the environment and people is waste pollution. “Throughout our country, we are plagued by littering, illegal dumpsites and the scourge of plastic waste that enters our river systems, our wetlands and ultimately our Oceans,” says Minister Creecy.

While the country has made significant strides in improving waste Management since 1994, almost a third of households still do not have regular weekly household waste removal services. Households are sometimes forced to find their own solutions to waste management ...solutions that are often damaging to the health of communities and the well-being of the environment.

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One of the 22 Waste Collection and Landfill Management trucks that are being handed to struggling municipalities. Minister Creecy handed over the truck to Merafong and Rand West Local Municipalities



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environment.

“To achieve the goals of this strategy all of us must play our part: national and provincial government must support municipalities to develop local integrated waste management strategies. We must ensure our landfills comply with the regulatory environment and waste does not leach into ground water or into the soil. We must invest in the yellow fleet and every year we must ensure more and more homes have access to safe waste disposal,” says Minister Creecy.

Government has set up the regulatory environment for extended producer responsibility schemes to promote re-cycling in the packaging, electronics and lighting

industries with recent regulations gazetted for new sectors such as used oil and pesticides.

The regulations for organic waste treatment, and organic waste composting, have also been published for implementation in order to divert waste away from landfills and create new industries.

“Communities must begin to separate their waste at home so that waste reclaimers can undertake their work in a dignified manner. Households must teach family members not to litter and must work with their neighbours to prevent illegal dumpsites. All of us must participate in regular clean up campaigns to beautify our communities and protect our environment,”

says Minister Creecy.

In addition, the Department has also cooperated with National Treasury and the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) to change the Municipal Infrastructure Grant Policy so that municipalities can access the grant to fund their yellow fleet.

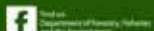
“Government and the private sector must work with waste reclaimers so that we build a dignified waste, reclaiming industry that promotes waste diversion from landfills, promotes the circular economy and gives a decent livelihood to the tens of thousands of men and women who do the daily back-breaking work of the recycling industry,” urged Minister Creecy.

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