

ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM, MR M.N MOKOENA, MPL, DURING THE ADOPT PROGRAMME AND CLIMATE CHANGE COMPETITION PRIZE GIVING CEREMONY HELD AT THE EHLANZENI DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY COMPLEX IN NELSPRUIT, MBOMBELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY.

Thursday, 10 November 2011

- Programme Director, Dr T Mlauli-Moshidi, Sector Specialist in our Department;
- Executive Mayor of Ehlanzeni District Municipality, Councillor Letta Shongwe;
- Our Sponsor, TSB, represented by the General Manager for Corporate Communication, Mr Vusi Khoza;
- Our Sponsor, SAPPI, represented by the General Manager for Lomati Sawmill, Mr T. Giliomee;
- Chief Director of Environmental Services in our Department, Mr Sam Maluleka;
- The representative of the Department of Education, Ms P. Mbatha;
- Officials from our Department and other government Departments;
- Our learners, who we are proud of;
- Members of the Media;
- Distinguished guests;
- Ladies and gentlemen;

Good Morning!

POLITICAL INTRODUCTION BY JOHN SIKHOSANA

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Working Together: Saving Tomorrow Today!

Ladies and gentlemen;

In 19 days time, South Africa will play host to the 17th Conference of Parties, commonly known as COP17, in Durban. This conference, which is run by the United Nations, is aimed at convincing world nations to legally agree on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, while at the same time, agreeing on ways to mitigate the impact of climate change and global warming. It will seek to advance the implementation of the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol, as well as the Bali Action Plan agreed at COP13 in Indonesia in 2007, and the Cancun Agreements reached at COP 16 in Mexico last December.

The Kyoto Protocol, adopted in Japan on 11 December 1997 sets binding targets for 37 industrialised countries and the European community to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by an average of five (5) percent against 1990 levels by 2012.

As a Province, we just recently convened stakeholders interested in the sustainability of our environment, to a Provincial Summit on Climate Change which was a build up to the Durban talks. This gave all stakeholders an opportunity to contribute to the national position, which will be presented at the summit.

At the end of the two (2) day summit, we amongst others, collectively agreed:

- To mitigate our climate change impact through reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
- To co-operate with affected sectors such as agriculture, water, mining, forestry, local authorities, industry, energy, transport, to reduce the impact.
- To ensuring the conservation of biodiversity in the province;

- To educate and create awareness to establish programmes and projects in partnership with all stakeholders to respond to the challenge of climate change;
- To promoting the development of a green economy through the implementation of the waste management hierarchy, cleaner technologies and development mechanisms;
- To ensure the contribution of ecosystem goods and services to the social and economic development of the Province; and
- To increase the contribution of a low carbon footprint in the economy of the province through the promotion of renewable energies and the creation of sustainable livelihoods.

We therefore pride ourselves with programmes such as the *School Climate Change Literacy Programme*, which continues to enlighten our children about the significance of preserving the environment, and at the same time, giving them information on Climate Change and its impact.

Ladies and gentlemen;

The Adopt Programme aims to give recognition to all the participants in general, and the category winners in particular. It consists of two sub-programmes, namely:

- **The Adopt-a-Schoolyard Programme:** which focuses on school enviro-clubs, learners and teachers within the formal school situation; and
- **The Adopt-a-Spot Programme:** which focuses on community enviro-clubs, community groups, youth groups, home based care groups outside the formal school situation.

Through this programme, we aim to raise environmental awareness through the sustainable addressing of environmental issues that require local action, which in

turn ensures environmental improvement and a better life for all. This programme also has a competition element which contributes to a friendly but fierce challenge.

The judging criteria for the competition includes amongst others:

- The physical greening of the school premises, trees, lawn, shrubs, indigenous planting;
- Physical cleanliness of a school, litter-free and no burning of waste;
- Promoting health issues such as food gardens to supplement feeding schemes, hygiene, clean toilets, hand washing;
- Resource usage such as physical minimisation of water and energy wastage, water wise principles, proper soil management, prevention of pollution; and
- Arguably, the most important, action projects such as plant nursery, re-using or re-cycling of waste, adoption of wetland, development of park and so forth.

This year there were 141 entries for the *Adopt-a-Schoolyard Programme* and 51 entries for the *Adopt-a-Spot Programme*.

The **Climate Change Competition** has been running for a number of years, but was amended for 2010. The motivation for these changes was to align the competition with Mpumalanga's Pre-COP 17 strategy and activities. The competition combined perfectly well with the Mpumalanga Climate Change Literacy Programme.

The Climate Change Literacy Programme was introduced to communities and schools to demystify climate change for the citizens of Mpumalanga. It was further aimed at sensitising the people about the causes, effects and implications of Climate Change for Mpumalanga. We are of the opinion that a sound knowledge base on climate change will ensure a climate change literate citizenry:

- That understands their influence on climate and climate's influence on them and their society;
- That is capacitated to make responsible and informed decisions with regard to activities that may affect climate;
- That talks about climate and climate change in a meaningful way.

Our Climate Change Literacy Manual has proved to be very valuable in the learners' preparations for their various items. The competition has reinforced the knowledge that the learners' gained from the Climate Change Literacy Programme. During the rehearsals and adjudication, the learners were active environmental ambassadors by spreading the Climate Change message.

The Climate Change Competition consisted of five (5) categories, namely:

- A Song category – for Grade 1 and 2;
- A Poem category – for Grade 3 and 4;
- A Poster category – for Grade 5;
- A Speech category – Grade 6 and 7 and Grade 8 and 9

In total, 180 entries were received for the competition. Ninety (90) entries were adjudicated on at district level. The first three (3) places in every category per District, went through to the Provincial adjudication process which took place at Emakhazeni on 31 August 2011.

Some finalists in the song, poem and speech categories had the opportunity to perform their items at the Climate Change Summit which was held in this venue on 6 and 7 October 2011. This was a great hit and some contestants even received a standing ovation.

