

MEDIA STATEMENT

East London; Thursday; 26 May 2011

For Immediate Release

EASTERN CAPE CLIMATE CHANGE RESPONSE KICKS IN

MEC of Economic Development and Environmental Affairs, Mcebisi Jonas issues call to action to all Eastern Cape role players around the province's Climate Change Response Strategy

Eastern Cape interest groups emerged united in their course to address challenges posed by climate change following a stakeholder workshop. The workshop was convened by the Department of Economic Development and Environmental Affairs a precursor to the province's Climate Change Conference which is scheduled to take place from 08 to 10 June 2011 in East London.

"We have a plan and are now firming up collective efforts to address climate change in the Eastern Cape" said Jonas as he explained that discussions are focused around the Eastern Cape Climate Change Response Strategy whilst identifying about five (5) key projects that can be catalysts on how to effectively respond to climate change.

"The theme of the conference titled '**Today's Climate Action Secures Tomorrow's Benefits**' is quite appropriate as it calls us all into doing something for our own sake and that of our children" further added Jonas. "With the response strategy as a guide, we are mobilising all efforts around a common agenda that is turning what would merely be a challenge, into an opportunity".

It is predicted that some of the impacts of climate change in the Eastern Cape could include rise in sea levels, more hot days and heat waves, more intense rains and overall changes in annual average precipitation.

The response strategy predicts that some of the effects of these challenges could include major loss of livestock, grazing, crops and infrastructure. These meaning threats to financial sustainability, existing commercial and subsistence farming operation and rural livelihoods.

Also feared is general increase in occurrence of disease; exacerbation of effects on people with HIV/AIDS, the elderly and the poor.

On the opportunity side, the strategy highlights potential Eastern Cape based interventions which could benefit both the environment and economy. These include initiating the development of a renewable energy centre, set up a clean energy purchasing pool, an incentive scheme to shift from private to public modes of transport as well as mitigation in solid waste and wastewater treatment.

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“Contralesa welcomes this initiative and encourages the province to take its rightful role in this regard. More importantly to us is the fact that we have been involved for a long time in a range of projects that are addressing issues of the environment and climate change. It is especially for this reason that we welcome the province’s efforts” Nokonwaba Matikinca, Head of Rural Development in Buffalo City Metro’s Contralesa.

“We believe it is important for the private and public sector to join hands in building a better and more sustainable future for us all. It is with this spirit that we are part of today’s workshop, are contributing to the response strategy and will be partaking in the upcoming conference” said Les Holbrook of the Border-Kei Chamber of Business.

An elated Jonas concludes “Today’s stakeholder workshop - which is essentially a forerunner to the conference - is clear and firm about the need for us to do something and to start packaging it as a collective picture that explains the extent of the Eastern Cape’s effort. We are happy that we are now firming up this thinking around the province’s Climate Change Response Strategy”

Further details about the Eastern Cape Climate Change Conference and Eastern Cape Climate Response Strategy is available on www.ecclimateaction.org

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