



Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS & TOURISM



“Innovation for Sustainable Development”

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MEC OFFICE

**Department of Economic Development , Environmental Affairs and Tourism MEC,
Honourable Mlungisi Mvoko, remarks at the Provincial Enviro-Awards at Dan’s
Lodge in Mthatha, September 12, 2019**

Programme-Director

Distinguished Guests

Teachers and learners

Good morning...

Today, let me begin by acknowledging that today South Africa and the rest of the world is commemorating 42 years since the brutal murder of our martyr, Steven Bantu Biko. His legacy remains a matter of reflection for our society. Biko was a visionary leader of a large nation who has inspired global political will by promoting initiatives and narratives that advance sustainable growth in African communities.

Programme-Director...

True to Biko’s belief on sustainable growth, we are also here today to acknowledge schools that have pursued the examination of thoughtful themes like the sustainable use of our natural resources. These learning institutions have also been probing climate change in relation to our inaction as society. We are here to celebrate young people with big ideas to protect or restore the environment; a vision for a more sustainable

future. They believe in a bright future for our planet, and have what it takes to be a Young Champions of the Earth. Therefore, these awards are highest environmental honour set out to highlight schools that have led a response to climate change and sustainable development through example and action.

Ladies and gentlemen...

The sustainable society we want to achieve is encapsulated in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which paint a vision of a Planet in where all people enjoy a clean environment, health, education, safety, peace and dignified work.

Similarly the AU's Agenda 2063, stresses the need for Africa's natural resource base to be managed sustainably and in such a way that the needs of all our continent's people can be met.

These visions are localised in our National Development Plan – Vision 2030. Achieving sustainable economic and social development, requires us to commit ourselves to ensuring that we recommit ourselves to work to realise the environmental rights promised in our constitution as a key enabler of a natural resource base that can in perpetuity sustainably support life on earth.

Teachers and Learners...

We are not yet winning the battle in relation to environmental degradation. We are not yet winning the battle in relation to people that are illegally dumping rubbish and even dead animals on their street corners. We are not yet winning the battle in relation to broken sewer pipes leaking sewerage into our river streams and oceans.

These are all so clearly interlinked with climate change and sustainable growth. Environmental degradation is linked to obstacles and problems of development. We see today devastating floods - including recently at Port St Johns. We see today drought in the Karoo progressing in a way that it becomes a terrible threat to food security. We see already today heatwaves not only killing people, but high temperatures resulting in dam levels in the province dropping drastically due to evaporation.

Programme-Director...in conclusion

It is clear that climate change threatens decades of development progress and places in jeopardy all our plans for inclusive and sustainable development. From increased poverty and food insecurity, to growing water stress and accelerated environmental damage, climate change is a clear and present threat. Fighting against environmental degradation is a race of our lives and for our lives. It is a race we can and must win.

THANK YOU!!