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The deputy minister of forestry, fisheries and the environment, Makhotso Soty. **Photo:** DFFE

CoM creates jobs to keep the city clean

Tumelo Waga Dibakwane

The City of Mbombela (CoM) has created 2 000 new jobs for the unemployed.

The deputy minister of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), Makhotso Soty, officially launched the Cleaning and Greening Programme (CGP) at the NG Kerk's open-air auditorium on Thursday January 11.

The programme is aimed at tackling poverty and unemployment while ensuring the environment is cleaned and protected.

Soty said illegal dumping and littering are some of the most common problems in South Africa, across all municipalities in the country. Ineffective waste management practices are adversely affecting the well-being of communities. "President Cyril Ramaphosa asked all of us as government leaders to come up with programmes to create jobs for our people, especially post Covid-19. As a department, we have responded to the president's call with this initiative to create jobs while contributing to a cleaner environment," she said.

The DFFE minister, Barbara Creecy, launched the national CGP last year. The programme is currently being implemented across all nine provinces. The CoM is one of the 14 prioritised municipalities for the programme's expansion. It aims to increase waste management across participating municipalities by having more workers being employed through the Expanded Public Works Programme.

Creecy said more municipal workers will lead to improved waste management capacity while simultaneously addressing service delivery, skills development, unemployment and creating cleaner towns. The programme prioritises the employment of women, youth and people with disabilities.

"This programme will see community members working with the government cleaning their communities while earning a monthly stipend. The programme will allow you, the participants, to put food on the table... to provide for yourselves and your families while carrying out the important task of keeping our communities clean," Soty told participants during the launch.

In response, the CoM's executive mayor, Sibongile Makushe-Mazibuko, thanked the department for the allocation of 2 000 additional participants to the programme. She said this will not only ensure the city's cleanliness, but will also ensure that participants will be able to put food on the table. She encouraged the participants to grab this opportunity with both hands, as it could have been given to others.