



**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE ASA
ECOLABELING SPEECH**

**DELIVERED BY DEPUTY MINISTER NOXOLO KIVIET
30 SEPTEMBER
IRE AND ICE HOTEL, MENLYN- PRETORIA**

Programme Director

Premiers present here and on our virtual platforms [Names to be confirmed]

Chairperson of the board Ntate Jeffrey Mahachi

Board members

CEO Ntate Richard Somanje

Management of the Agrément South Africa

Board members of other Sister entities and CEO

Members of the portfolio committee [proper protocol]

DPWI management and officials

Leaders of industry bodies

Ladies and gentlemen

[Other attendees to be confirmed]

Greetings to one and all who are attending this prestigious event, this morning. It gives me great pleasure to share this moment with you in celebrating the launch of the eco labelling initiative. It gives me even more pleasure that I speak before you here today as we close down the Heritage month, a month set aside to celebrate and recognize aspects of our diverse culture both tangible and intangible: creative expressions such as music, arts and performances, our historical inheritance, language, the food we eat as well as popular memory. This is also a month of reflections: where we come from, where we are at and where we want to go.

Our constitutional obligation as enshrined in our constitution on the Bill of rights states that we have:

- a) *'Right to the environment that is not harmful to health and wellbeing'*
and
- b) *To have environment that is protected for the benefit of the present and future generations, through reasonable legislation and measures.*

We cannot over-emphasise the importance of timeous implementation of this project. It is great that it is launched by an entity of our Department and by extension an initiative of the state. We have always emphasised that our scientists, engineers and other built environment experts, must come to the party and help government to deal with these numerous challenges that we face in this sector. It also speaks to the inheritance we want to leave for our future generations.

I would like to congratulate the Green Buildings Unit of our Department who have been working for some time, together with our entities, to ensure that the Green Buildings Policy is launched and this Eco-labelling project gets off the ground. I know that this initiative has been a collaborative one and its launch must be a crowning moment for the late CEO of Agreement SA, Mr Joe Odhiambo- may his precious soul continue to rest in peace.

The establishment of this Eco-labelling system stems from the department's Green Building Policy which states that:

“DPW will facilitate the establishment of an eco-labelling system for building materials and products, and will ensure that requirements for the use of environmentally sensitive eco-labelled materials and products be incorporated into SANS 10400X and in particular into indoor environmental quality and comfort, and material resource conservation and efficiency.”

Even though the DPWI has facilitated the the establishment of an eco-labelling system for building materials and products, this will apply across the board in this country and will help in ensuring that all products used in construction meet the requirements of being environmentally sensitive. This is a crucial intervention given the current situation that the world is facing in the ever-changing environmental and climate situation. We will remember the floods we recently experienced in the recent past which forces us to quickly adapt and use building materials that will shield us from the vagaries of climate change whilst we also protect the environment in materials that we use.

We call for built environment professionals to come up with innovative building policies, plans and materials to mitigate this risk.

Ladies and gentlemen, we all know that the Department of Public Works & Infrastructure is the biggest landlord in the country. But the biggest problem that we face, is that most our buildings are dilapidated and do not conform to green buildings policy. There is a big drive from the Green Buildings Unit to re-energise the Unit and that it drives the Policy which was launched in October 2018. This policy sets out principles for government-owned, operated or occupied buildings. The key deliverables that we are expecting from the Green Building Policy are energy efficiency and renewable energy; water efficiency; integrated solid waste management and the integration of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS).

Aligned with the *Green Building Policy* we are satisfied that the Green Buildings Unit is on track as one of the objectives of, has been to facilitate the establishment of an eco-labelling system for building materials and products, that we are launching here today. Agrément South Africa, has developed guidelines and minimum standards, referred to as *Specifications*, for the use of environmentally sensitive eco-labelled materials. These guidelines and specifications have been adopted by the Department and incorporated into the Department's relevant *Standard Specifications for Construction Works*.

We are and have always been proud of Agrément South Africa an agency that was set up in 1969 and formally founded through legislation in 2019 to bring impartial judgment to the evaluation of innovative construction products and systems in the interest of consumers, and the construction industry at large.

I believe that if we can follow what the policy states with regards to the ecoASA Label, we will go a long way in meeting *the urgent environmental tasks at hand. We will be able to conserve the ever-decreasing natural resources like water and electricity as well fight the depletion of the ozone layer through limiting the CO2 emissions.* Any environmental claims that manufacturers of building materials and products make will be verified through the ecoASA Label.

Ladies and gentlemen, what has really excited us about the work that has been put into this system is that it takes into cognisance the South African situation. The system adopts international standards but adapts them for suitability in South Africa. ecoASA label will, as far as possible, conform with ISO 14024 Environmental Labels and Declarations: Environmental Labelling Type I, Guiding Principles and Procedures. I invite industry players and product developers to take a closer look at these principles and I am sure they will not be disappointed and will willingly work with and apply for ecoASA label. This project shows what is possible and it is already helping to propel the green building revolution.

I would like to congratulate Agrément South Africa in reaching this significant milestone in the establishment of the ecoASA Label in terms of developing guidelines that will govern the scheme and minimum standards applicable for the use of environmentally sensitive eco-labelled materials and products. It is a giant step forward that we have this event, attended by key industry players and potential clients, to officially launch the ecoASA Label and introduce the scheme to you all. It is even more encouraging to be told that Agrément South Africa will start issuing labels from the next financial year.

I want to believe that the ecoASA Label that we are launching today, will be properly communicated far and wide for purposes of bringing awareness regarding the scheme to key industry players and attracting clients. As we have been promised, we would also like see that in the next financial year, ASA will begin taking on clients for the assessment of their materials and products concerning environmental claims.

I am also proud to announce that in November we have been invited to participate at la Feria Internacional De La Habana 2022 (FIHAV 2022) in Havana, Cuba where we will be able to showcase what South Africa has to offer. This way will be able to leave a footprint that future generations would be proud of and thank us for ensuring that we leave them with a better planet.

I will also be part of the delegation that will be taking this initiative on the Roadshow around SA.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am always inspired by what Dr Tibane – (may his soul continue to rest in peace) says about growth in his book ***Master your thoughts... Transform your life***, I quote

“Growth is the call we must answer

Growth is a challenge we must face

Growth is a change we must embrace

Growth is a character we must develop

Growth is a commitment we must make

Growth is a price we must pay”.

We must grow and realize the potential we have.

I would like to leave you with the words of Archbishop Desmond Mpilo Tutu I quote '*Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.*'

Let this be the heritage we leave for future generations.

Let this also be in line with our constitution to improve the quality of life and free the potential of each person as this is our constitutional obligation.

Thank you, Ndiyabulela, Kealeboha.

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