

**Minister of Public Works  
Ms Stella Sigcau  
17 July 2000**

[Back](#)

**Launch of the Clean and Green Project  
Gerald Wright Memorial Hall  
Grabouw**

Master of Ceremonies, Ms Louise Michaels

The Deputy Ministers respectively for Environmental Affairs and Public Works, Ms Joyce Mabudafhasi and Mrs Buyi Nzimande

Their Worships the Mayors of Grabouw and Oostenberg, Mr Stanley Shuma and Mr De La Cruz

MEC for Transport and Public Works in the Western Cape, Mr Piet Meyer

The General Manager of the South African Breweries, Mr Dennis Coetzer

Representatives from the South African Local Government Association, Mr Thabo Mokoena and Ms Norma-India Mfeketho, who is also the Mayor of Greater Cape Town

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

The history of humanity is intricately linked to the earth and other forms of creation on it. Throughout the ages a balance has been maintained between the use of natural resources to sustain human life and the responsibility of humanity to care for the environment has become more pronounced as industry and technology developed.

Yet we still find that basic care is lacking, more often in poor areas where education and other resources are also lacking, and where a situation of disrespect has developed. We acknowledge that over the past decade the value systems of the majority of South Africans have been systematically eroded by the doctrine of apartheid.

At the same time we acknowledge that everybody has a role in ensuring that the spread of HIV/Aids is curbed in our country. Although Government is committed to putting programmes in place to fight HIV/Aids, Government alone cannot achieve the objectives of these programmes. We reaffirm the close relationship between HIV/Aids and poverty, and are convinced that investing resources only on HIV/Aids without addressing poverty will not solve the problem.

As enshrined in our Constitution, all citizens of South Africa, present and future, have the right to a safe and healthy environment and to a life of well-being. This programme that we are launching today, is yet another example of our Constitution in practice. It is the Constitution at work.

However, we also acknowledge that poverty is still at the centre of most of our social ills, including that in certain areas we do not have the capacity to look after our own doorstep environment. The Department of Public Works alone has spent over R1 billion in poverty alleviation programmes since 1997, mainly through the Community Based Public Works Programme.

In this context growth and development within South Africa stem from the principle of sustainability. This means that the current human development need and response should not compromise the life-supporting capacity of the world's eco-system or the developmental needs of future generations.

Since 1994, policy development has brought us on par with leading economies in terms of thought and practice concerning environmental conservation and management. Where before environment seemed to have meant only plants and animals, we are now placing people and their needs at the forefront of environmental management. This means that we have to consider the interaction between people and their environment in the context of serving the human physical, psychological, developmental, cultural and social interests equitably. This is adequately embodied in our new Environmental Management Act where everyone has a fundamental human right to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being and to have the environment protected, for the benefit of present and future generations.

Mindful of national development needs such as employment creation, rural and urban development and capacity building, the Department of Public Works' Clean and Green Programme responds with the cooperation of institutions like the South African Breweries and communities such as yours, to create an immediately visible impact and possible future service structure in Public/Private Partnerships.

The Clean and Green programme is in fact a Department of Public Works' project where the community is mobilised to participate in planning and fighting poverty in the community. Other initiatives by the Department include community involvement in the maintenance of state assets, where, through the dedicated maintenance contracts for example, employment is created for local community members. Since 1997, direct employment on Public Works' projects was created for more than 40 300 people, of which almost 40% were women and 37% youth.

Clean and Green incorporates the development of an appropriate environmental awareness drive for all sectors of our society to reinforce harmonious and traditional links with the environment. It also includes the initiation of measures that will contribute towards the immediate building of appropriate community based environmental institutions.

What we are aiming at through the Clean and Green Programme, is to rehabilitate the environment through encouraging, educating and empowering local communities to improve their doorstep environment by means of specific projects related to the monitoring and management of waste. A further aim is to reduce unemployment during the project cycle and create opportunities for future entrepreneurship in this respect, thereby avoiding apathy and dependence. It also links with the Masakhane Campaign and should eventually contribute to the functioning of the local authority.

Here in Grabouw and at Wallacedene, this programme represents yet another milestone in ensuring that our young people are removed from destructive activities to play a central role in building this nation. Only people younger than 35 were employed on this programme. An amount of R1,85 million was allocated to these projects. The project also provides a stimulation of the local economy through the expenditure of income generated by participation.

This Government has committed itself in investing in young people in general and women in particular. We must therefore mobilise all sections of our communities to take charge of their destinies by taking charge of local development initiatives. Working under the leadership and guidance of local authorities, we must continue to support job creation initiatives such as this one in order to ensure that we enhance our anti-poverty programme.

To keep the environment clean and healthy, it is envisaged that the local authority will continue this service. Whether or not they will outsource, contract or absorb some of these people into its regular workforce when the contract period ends, is a decision they will take.

From Public Works, it is appropriate that we do the Clean and Green projects within the context of our Community Based Public Works Programme. This is also the programme under which we fund these projects. R10 million has been provided on our budget. Clean and Green projects support the objectives of the CBPWP in terms of job creation for local communities, sustainable operations and capacity building of local structures and institutions. They also blend in respect of educational value and social responsiveness to ensure economic growth and environmental conservation.

Today is a re-launch of the Clean and Green programme that we are involved in. Similar projects are underway in six more provinces. Only the Northern Cape and Mpumalanga are not currently affected. All these projects are including participants from the local community to do the initial cleaning of their doorstep environments.

I trust that these projects will build awareness of our caring for our environment, educate our children and empower people to participate in the planning, development and management of natural resources.

[top](#)