

Minister of Public Works
Mr J Radebe
29 September 1996

[Back](#)

Presentation at the 50th Anniversary of the Tree Society of Southern Africa

Chairperson, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, it is a great honour for me to be invited to say a few words at the 50th anniversary celebrations of the Tree Society of Southern Africa at the Presidency today.

The TSAA has a critical role to play in our Reconstruction and Development Programme, by undertaking campaigns primarily concerned with the preservation of our indigenous flora and by educating the people of South Africa of the value of plants and assisting in their identification.

Our government is committed to ecologically sound development practices, with improved economic opportunities for local communities, which offer important models for development, especially in the rural areas.

The Department of Public Works wishes to congratulate the TSSA and kindred bodies in preserving and promoting an interest in the heritage of South Africa, particularly its indigenous trees and flora.

We also wish to congratulate the TSSA on its role in having this area of natural vegetation in an important and prominent position - the northern slope of Meintjieskop, at the Presidency - declared a heritage site. While the Department is doing much to improve the condition of the site, we would welcome assistance from the TSSA in these efforts.

This would be a splendid opportunity to present a small showcase of South African flora to the many important visitors who will pass by in future years, and must not be neglected or discarded.

The concern of Government and its appreciation of the country's natural heritage can be gauged from the President's inaugural address in which, when speaking of the great beauty of South Africa, he made mention of only one specific feature: its trees.

The programme initiated by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry to eradicate noxious exotic invaders is yet another manifestation of the Government's concern regarding these matters - which should reassure the TSSA and other concerned bodies.

It is important that the knowledge held by the TSSA be shared with members of the formerly disadvantaged communities, so that the appreciation of these matters can be imparted to all who must take responsibility for preserving this country's heritage for future generations.

The Department of Public Works is committed to these endeavours and would like to assure the TSSA of our constant support.

I thank you.

[top](#)