

## DEPUTY MINISTER, REJOICE MABUDAFHASI HANDS OVER R39 MILLION FREE STATE ECO TOWN ON WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

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**4 June 2010**

A R39 million rand Eco-town, Buyisela was today, 4 June 2010 handed over to the Mantsopa Community by Deputy Water and Environmental Affairs Minister, Rejoice Mabudafhasi in Free State. The handover forms part of the World Environment Day (WED) celebrations in South Africa.

Celebrations will take place under the WED theme, “**Many species. One planet. One future.**” The theme is pertinent as it echoes the urgent call to conserve diversity of life on our planet.

Speaking at the hand over event, Mabudafhasi said, “Our decision to host World Environment Day 2010 here in Mantsopa was partly influenced by our plan to officially announce the cleaning and greening projects currently being implemented we call them Eco-Town or Buyisela. This work we carry out with our partner Indalo Yethu. The choice of the name was strategically made to convey the message that we restore dignity of communities across the country through key initiatives that will make the towns and residential areas more inhabitable.”

Mabudafhasi went on to say that she hoped the residents and business would embrace the positive changes the Buyisela project is already making in the area. Governments of the world, organisations and communities in many countries around the world have been and continue to campaign for change of attitudes towards sustainable living. “Mantsopa too needs to come on board the progressive Green Revolution agenda,” she emphasised.

The Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) has set aside R400 million for the Buyisela Eco-Towns programme that is being rolled out to 10 municipalities. This initiative aims to create ten eco-towns modelled on sustainability as a legacy project which will serve as a framework or blueprint for other towns to follow. The project was launched in October last year in Mthatha, Eastern Cape. In Mantsopa the project will be carried out by Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) in partnership with Indalo Yethu in conjunction with the Mantsopa Local Municipality.

In Mantsopa the project includes deliverables such as tree planting, street cleaning, installation of bins and equipment, establishment of a market area, composting facility, recycling depot, community food gardens as well as education and awareness. The project is part of the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) with an over-arching objective to create job opportunities, skills development and support and encourage the emergence of small, micro and medium enterprises (SMMEs).

World Environment Day was established by the UN General Assembly in 1972 at the Stockholm Conference on the human environment. Commemorated each year on 5 June, WED is one of the principal vehicles through which the UN stimulates worldwide awareness of the environment and enhances political attention and action.

South Africans are urged to make a difference, by acting in an environmentally responsible manner.

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