

Municipalities urged to care for the environment

PRETORIA: Deputy Minister of Environmental Affairs Barbara Thomson has called on municipalities to ensure the country's environment is clean.



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"I would like to encourage other municipalities to adopt the best practices ... and ensure we live in clean environments which are healthy, carbon dioxide free, which promote energy mix, manage their water resources effectively and whose resilience is strengthened every day to fight the onslaught of climate change," Deputy Minister Thomson said.

She said the environment sector was mandated to ensure environmental sustainability in terms of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa through the National Environmental Management Act and other relevant international agreements.

"Furthermore, the national and provincial spheres of government have a responsibility in terms of Section 54 of the Constitution to support and strengthen the capacity of municipalities to manage their own affairs, to exercise their powers and perform their functions," Deputy Minister Thomson said.

She was speaking at the 4th Greenest Municipality Competition Awards ceremony at Karibu Lodge in Tzaneen, Limpopo, Wednesday, 28 January.

The Greenest Municipality Competition is aimed at addressing issues around environmental protection, social upliftment and economic growth, as per the recommendations of the 2006/07 Cleanest Town Competition (CTC) Report.

Deputy Minister Thomson said she was saddened that the number of participating municipalities had dropped down to 85 from 111 in 2013.

"This implies the residents of the non-participating municipalities are going to be deprived of the benefits envisaged in this competition and other programmes of the department.

"The breakdown of the participation paints an undesirable picture for the objectives of the Environmental Sector Strategy for the period 2014-19," Deputy Minister Thomson said.

South Africa has a total of 278 municipalities, which includes metropolitan and district municipalities.

Provinces that participated in the competition are KwaZulu-Natal (15 entries), Eastern Cape (six), Limpopo (25), Western Cape seventeen (17), Mpumalanga eighteen (18) and Gauteng (2).

"The Free State, Northern Cape and North West provinces didn't participate. This is a cause for great concern and I will schedule meetings with my counterparts to discuss this and get them back on-board," said Deputy Minister Thomson.

The winners for the 4th Greenest Municipality Competition Awards are as follows:

Local Municipality Category

Position	Prizes Money	Winning Municipality
1. The Overall Winner	R3.5 million	Mogalakwena
2. First Runner Up	R3 million	uMhlathuze
3. Second Runner Up	R2.5 million	Nkomazi

Metropolitan Municipality Category		
Position	Prizes Money	Winning Municipality
1. The Overall Winner	R3.5 million	City of Johannesburg
2. First Runner Up	R3 million	Nelson Mandela Bay
3. Second Runner Up	R2.5 million	Buffalo City

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