

## SA oceans to unlock opportunities in economy

South Africa's oceans have the potential to unlock the country's economic development opportunities, said Deputy Minister of Environmental Affairs, Barbara Thomson.



Withthaya Phonsawat via  
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"We thus need to develop a proactive approach to understand our oceans capacity and role to ensure socio-economic emancipation while protecting this vast and fragile environment," Thomson said.

Speaking on Monday during the celebrations of World Oceans Day in Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape, she said the use of various marine resources in the country's ocean space had increased.

"We aspire to create partnerships while strengthening existing ones to develop means and ways to share the wealth of the ocean for the benefit of all South Africans," Thomson said.

### Efforts to protect and maintain marine biodiversity

She said the Department of Environmental Affairs will continue its efforts to protect and maintain the country's marine biodiversity.

"Aspects of climate change, ocean acidification, pollution, unsustainable coastal area development and unwanted impacts from resource extraction need to be addressed for human well-being, environmental prosperity, and integrity," Thomson said.

### World Oceans Day

World Oceans Day is aimed at raising awareness about the significance of the marine environment and promotes the role of the oceans as well as the importance of conserving and protecting the marine environment.

The event is celebrated under the UNEP's theme "Healthy Oceans, Healthy Planet".

The department strategically customised the theme to "Healthy Oceans, Healthy Planet: Enabling Sustainable Ocean Economy Development," as a way to highlight government's commitment to sustainable ocean economy through Operation Phakisa.

### Operation Phakisa

Operation Phakisa promotes economic growth and job creation in line with the goals outlined in the National Development Plan.

Operation Phakisa's oceans economy lab is estimated to have the potential to contribute up to R177 billion to the Gross Domestic Product and create just over one million jobs by 2033.

The oceans economy lab has four priority areas, which include marine transport and manufacturing, offshore oil and gas exploration, aquaculture as well as marine protection services and ocean governance.

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