

FREE STATE TACKLES CLIMATE CHANGE

15 December 2011.

BLOEMFONTEIN – Free State is major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions that pollute the environment because of its vast coal mines and oil purification plants in Sasolburg, some 340 km north of Bloemfontein.

According to Free State Tourism, Environment and Economic Affairs MEC Mxolisi Dukwana this makes it imperative for the province to take part in efforts to clean up the environment. Gatherings such as the Climate Change summit underway in Durban are a sure way of achieving this, he said on Thursday, December 8.

“In our province we have many mines that pollute the air and together with the mine authorities, we are making some investigation on how best to avoid pollution. Here in South Africa there is 95 percent of coal produced and our economy depends on the use of electricity which is generated from coal,” Dukwane said.

Meanwhile, the University of Free State has received a nod of approval at the Cop 17 Climate Change Conference in Durban for the short course it presented in partnership with the Chief Directorate Population and Development of the United Nations Populations (UNFPA).

According to the press statement UFS received “honourable recognition”, for the Department of Social Development’s short course entitled: “Leadership Training in Sustainable Development: The Population, Environment and Development (PED) Nexus”.

The statement was issued at COP17 and adds that the course is recognised in a publication of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as one of 10 innovative experiences and best practices in population and development in the developing world.

CoP 17, ran between Monday, November 28 and Friday, December 9 in Durban to assess progress in dealing with climate change and negotiations for an instrument for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

The conference took place against the backdrop of successful negotiations that took place in Cancun Mexico last year. It was widely expected that the CoP17 would lead to the finalisation of a legally binding instrument and on the operationalisation of the Green Climate Fund.

The UNDP as a key strategic partner for the South African government was expected to play a key role in supporting the government end pollution. An inter-agency programme of support has been developed in consultation with the government and other United Nations Agencies.

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