

Tribute to Minister Bomo Edna Edith Molewa



The Branch: Chemicals and Waste Management deeply mourns the death of our beloved Minister of Environmental Affairs, Honourable Dr Edna Molewa.

Her unexpected passing on the 22 September 2018 is a great loss to the Department and to the Chemicals and Waste Management sector as a whole. The Minister pioneered and spearheaded many initiatives within the sector to advance integrated waste management in South Africa.

Minister Molewa firmly understood the Waste sector and became a champion for the marginalized within the sector. She ensured that the Waste Pickers were included in conference programmes and were afforded the opportunity to address their challenges and needs with the entire waste sector. It was her mission to improve the working conditions of these waste pickers

Her expertise, influence and exceptional ability to work behind the scenes has always been sought after by the various Secretariats of the UN chemicals and Waste Conventions to ensure a successful meeting and adoption of decisions and undertaking of significant actions to protect the environment, and human health.

Minister Molewa was an international thought leader on the concept of the Circular Economy and established the Africa Alliance on the Circular Economy in 2017 together with the environmental ministers from Nigeria and Rwanda and also ensured that it was adopted within programmes in the BRICS countries at the recent BRICS Summit held in South Africa where she played a very prominent role in mainstreaming the environmental agenda.

She served with conviction and ensured that the environmental sector responds to Presidential THUMA-MINA Initiative. The Thuma Mina Green Deeds Programme and Campaign remains her contribution to the mobilisation of every inhabitant of South Africa to become environmentally conscious. She wanted to see a South Africa free of litter and illegal dumping. She led to change attitudes and behaviour towards waste - and enable people to take responsibility for keeping their communities clean.

Through the adoption of the Secondary Asbestos Remediation Plan in parliament, Minister Molewa drove the roll-out of remediation projects in the most affected communities living in close proximity to historical asbestos mine dumps. Most recently in August this year Minister Molewa presided on the opening of a new school with Asbestos-free classrooms and the construction of new asbestos free roads in Mafefe in Limpopo.



Some of the key achievements of the Minister included the following:

- The amendment of the National Environmental Management: Waste Act in 2014 brought about considerable changes with significant input from the Minister. She paid meticulous attention to detail and understood what was required to effectively implement the Waste Act, its associated Regulations and the Norms and Standards for the waste sector.
- The Minister successfully held seven (7) Waste Khoro and Summit events. The Waste Khoro is a platform to engage with the waste management officers from all municipalities and provinces to deliberate on waste issues in the country.
- The Minister initiated a Recycling Enterprise Support Programme to promote the establishment of SMMEs, cooperatives and new entrants to the waste sector. This programme was designed to include previously disadvantaged groups so that they can participate meaningfully in the waste economy.
- The Minister called for new Industry Waste Management Plans for 4 waste streams, namely; tyre, paper and packaging, lighting and electronic waste. This encapsulates the principles of the circular economy and the extended producer responsibility.
- The Chemicals and Waste Economy Phakisa Lab outcomes resulted in 23 initiatives with opportunities relating to waste recycling and circular economy in order to contribute towards job creation and economic development.
- The launch of several large scale commercial business ventures jointly between government, the private sector and micro-collectors such as the Extrupet Bottle to Bottle (Phoenix PET) Plant in Wadeville, Mpack Polymers Plant in Germiston and the Liquid Packaging Plant in Springs.
- The Minister participated in various community clean up campaigns with the branch, such as the Mandela 67 minutes campaign.



As the Branch: Chemicals and Waste Management, our thoughts and prayers are with Dr Molewa's family, her colleagues in Cabinet and Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. We wish them strength during this time of grief and loss. May her soul rest in eternal peace.

The song has ended, but the melody lingers on...