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Title: Environmental partners meet to formulate national climate framework

By Michael Appel

Midrand - Environmental and climate stakeholders from across the country have gathered at the National Climate Change Summit to formulate a framework to lead South Africa in its fight against climate change.

The purpose of the National Framework on Sustainable Development is to identify the key challenges to South Africa's sustainable development as well as set the framework for a common understanding of climate change and necessary interventions.

South Africa's response to climate change is the formulation of the policy framework document, government then plans to deal with the detailed planning thereof and finally the implementation of such plans.

The summit, hosted by the Departments of Environmental Affairs and Science and Technology, aims to formally launch the policy process that will inform Cabinet's climate change policy decisions and directives in the future.

According to the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, all key climate change response stakeholders will have an opportunity to report back to South Africa on the most recent climate change research, initiatives and interventions at the summit, which is taking place from 3 to 6 March 2009.

Over 600 participants from government, organised labour, business and industry associations, public interest groups and academia will convene at the conference under the theme "Climate Action Now", the department said.

It is expected that much of the conference will deal with the developing world's expectations from the Climate Change Conference being held in Copenhagen, Denmark, in December 2009.

President Kgalema Motlanthe will deliver an opening address, and the Ministers of Environmental Affairs and Tourism Marthinus van Schalkwyk, Transport Jeff Radebe, Minerals and Energy Buyelwa Sonjica and Water Affairs and Forestry Lindiwe Hendricks, will present their department's respective adaptations and visions on climate change policy.

Other speakers include Business Unity South Africa Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Jerry Vilikazi and Chairperson of the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) Councillor Amos Masondo.

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) Deputy Secretary General Bheki Ntshalintshali is also scheduled to discuss labour's climate change vision, the department said. - BuaNews

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