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## Government unveils climate watch plan

**By Sapa**

Johannesburg - Pending cabinet approval, twenty national departments would be responsible for climate issues, government said at the close of the National Climate Change Summit on Friday.

"The summit will formally launch policies that would be handed over to cabinet for final decision making," said Joanne Yawitch, Deputy Director for General Environmental Quality and Protection, for the Department of Environmental Affairs.

The summit was held at the Gallagher Estate in Midrand, Johannesburg.

She said, for example, that the department of arts and culture would be responsible for raising public awareness on climate change.

The department of agriculture would be responsible for helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the agricultural sector.

The education department would teach learners about greenhouse gas emissions and its impact on the climate.

The labour department would be building skills by creating "green jobs" as part of expanding on energy efficiency and renewable energy.

"South Africans from all spheres of life have come together in Midrand to help develop the policy...our policies have been designed to create a low-carbon economy and society," Yawitch said.

Initially, 700 delegates - which later rose to 893 - attended the summit. They were from various sectors including government, business, labour and civil society.

Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism Marthinus van Schalkwyk said that even though the summit ended on a positive note, important challenges and tough decisions still lay ahead.

"We will continue to grapple and engage on areas where consensus still eludes us. Most importantly on the optimal energy mix for the country. This is the single most important area of work."

He said various gaps were identified and all those involved including national, provincial and local government would attend to these gaps as a top priority.

Having noted the challenges, Van Schalkwyk also said: "The summit far exceeded our expectations, there could not have been a stronger expression of political will by government and other stakeholders." - Sapa

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