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APRIL 2021 SUSTAINABILITY NEWSLETTER

For a copy of the Safety, Health and Environmental (SHE) Legislation Update, please go to:
<https://imbewu.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Monthly-SHE-Legislation-Update-April-2021.pdf>

INTERNATIONAL

GENERAL

RAIDS SUSPEND TOTAL'S \$20 BILLION GAS PROJECT – Safety and the conducting of business in Palma Mozambique has become an occupational hazard and recently forced Total SE to withdraw all of its Mozambique LNG Project personnel from the Afungi site. The project might only resume once it is safe for all persons, until then the Total SE has declared this a “*force majeure*” situation for all its outstanding obligations.

Source: EWN dated 26 April 2021

<https://ewn.co.za/2021/04/26/total-confirms-suspension-of-work-on-mozambique-gas-project>

CLIMATE CHANGE ACTIVISTS PERSECUTED – Climate scientists have raised concern that activists for the environment, who voice their beliefs through nonviolent civil disobedience groups, are being singled out, silenced and their acts criminalised. The fight to stop climate change has only become more relevant and urgent, therefore, to criminalise protests would only create fear and add to the hurdles activists must overcome. Experts and scientists have lobbied the support of 429 colleagues, from over 32 countries in an open letter published to world governments for an immediate change in their policies.

Source: The Guardian dated 29 April 2021

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/apr/19/environment-protest-being-criminalised-around-world-say-experts>

GLACIERS MELTING AT AN ACCELERATED RATE – A new study has found that glaciers are melting at an accelerated rate. The study reports that over the last two decades of the 21st Century, glaciers have lost approximately 270 billion tonnes of ice per year and “[t]he meltwater produced now accounts for about a fifth of global sea-level rise”. Glaciers form part of Earth’s water supply and their increased melting poses a threat of future droughts when glaciers have receded exponentially and can no longer serve as a water reserve.

Source: BBC News dated 29 April 2021

<https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-56921164>

AIR POLLUTION AFFECTS PEOPLE OF COLOUR MORE – Researchers have established that not only air pollution but various other types of pollution equally affect people of colour more than white people. This can be seen across states, urban or rural environments and individuals’ income levels. According to the research, historically discriminatory housing policies and the limited steps taken to remedy this, are a possible cause. In addition, researchers confirm of six emission sectors that are responsible for this disparity, four emissions have equally affected people of colour.

Source: Bloomberg Green dated 28 April 2021

https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-04-28/almost-all-types-of-air-pollution-disproportionately-affect-communities-of-color?cmpid=BB042921_GREENDAILY&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_term=210429&utm_campaign=greendaily

ISLAND SPECIES AND ENDEMICS AT GREATER RISK OF EXTINCTION DUE TO CLIMATE CHANGE – A new study has found that in the next three decades, islands including but not limited to the Caribbean, Indian Ocean and Madagascar could be bereft of their endemic plant life. Scientists calculate that endemic species are 10 times at a higher risk of extinction, in comparison to introduced species which will “remain relatively unscathed”. Furthermore, it was found that all species benefit from climate change mitigation and the risk of their extinction can be avoided if average global warming temperatures remain less than 1.5°C and not more than 3°C.

Source: Mongabay dated 14 April 2021

<https://news.mongabay.com/2021/04/island-species-and-endemics-will-bear-brunt-if-warming-exceeds-3c-study/>

BIDEN’S “WE ARE IN A DECISIVE DECADE”, USHERS THE US PLEDGE TO CUT CARBON EMISSIONS BY 50- 52% BY 2030 – The US, at a virtual summit of 40 global leaders, doubled its previous promise to cut carbon emissions. This was not followed by any similar commitment from India or China, the world’s two biggest carbon emitters. However, President Joe Biden stresses that nations being decisive on climate change will avoid worse consequences and it is a moral as well as economic imperative for countries to act immediately.

Source: BBC News dated 22 April 2021

<https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-56837927>

THE EU’S FARM TO FORK BIODIVERSITY STRATEGIES AIM TO ACHIEVE CLIMATE NEUTRALITY – The EU’s new sustainable system will be put in place to mitigate further climate change, to reverse biodiversity loss and to reshape its agriculture practices to feed Europeans in a healthier manner. The proposed changes include strict reductions for farms using fertiliser and increasing organic farming demands. A few of the strategies are explored alongside the respective legislation and policies to be put in place and how all of this aligns with the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy. Most sectors and farmers will be expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as obligations become stricter.

Source: Clean Energy Wire dated 5 March 2021

<https://www.cleanenergywire.org/factsheets/eus-farm-fork-strategy-impacts-climate-productivity-and-trade>

UK GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES THAT PLANS ARE IN MOTION TO CUT CARBON EMISSIONS BY 78% BY 2035 – The UK’s climate law will be extended to holding international aviation and shipping accountable for climate change in order to reach its goals. In addition, citizens will need to get accustomed to an increase in electric cars, low-carbon heating, renewable electricity and a slow in the sale as well as production of meat and dairy.

Source: BBC News dated 20 April 2021

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-56807520>

NEW ZEALAND FINANCIAL SECTOR TO REPORT ON THEIR CLIMATE IMPACT – New Zealand has embarked on making their law hold all parties accountable for their impact on the environment, this includes banks, insurance companies and investment firms. This law, the first of its kind in the world, will make all of the financial sector's environmental records transparent as climate reporting is made mandatory in the financial sector.

Source: EWN dated 14 April 2021

<https://ewn.co.za/2021/04/14/in-world-first-new-zealand-to-make-banks-report-climate-impact>

\$1 BILLION PLEDGED TO REWARD TROPICAL COUNTRIES THAT HALT DEFORESTATION– The US, UK and Norwegian governments have mobilised private companies to fund a carbon credit program which will pay double the going rate over other existing schemes, to reward tropical countries that halt deforestation. This initiative acts as an economic incentive for the protection of tropical forests, whilst preventing developing nations from having to choose between their ecological integrity and economic progress.

Source: Mongabay dated 23 April 2021

<https://news.mongabay.com/2021/04/governments-companies-pledge-1-billion-for-tropical-forests/>

PUBLICATIONS

SCIENTISTS WARN THAT THE TAPANULI ORANGUTAN IS ON THE BRINK OF EXTINCTION – Scientists at the University of Kent and Liverpool John Moores University believe that only an estimated 800 Tapanuli Orangutan apes are left in Indonesia's Sumatra forest. This rare great ape was discovered in 2017, however, unsustainable hunting and demand for farmlands have driven the apes out of their natural habitat and higher up into the mountains. In addition, a hydropower and road building scheme worth \$1,6 billion is currently under construction in the Batang Toru forest and this scheme will cut across the forest inhabited by the largest number of Tapanuli Orangutan apes.

Source: Plos One dated 2021

<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0238087>

AQUACULTURE POSES A GREATER RISK TO ANIMAL WELFARE – The farming of aquatic animals and plants has grown to a global scale, however, greater risks have risen such as biodiversity loss, ecological damage, overuse of antibiotics, pollution and a lack of sustainability. Becca Franks, a research scientist at New York University's Department of Environmental Studies found that specialised scientific studies about aquaculture animal's welfare are limited. The aquaculture industry which operates at a large scale has no point of scientific reference for the way it should function or cater for the animals' wellbeing and this leaves its operations and the animals at risk.

Source: Science Advances dated 2021

https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/7/14/eabg0677?utm_campaign=toc_advances_2021-04-02&et rid=307814892&et cid=3721947

OIL AND GAS RELIANT COMMUNITIES NEED A JUST TRANSITION – Researcher Craig Segall suggests that as countries advocate for greener methods of production and sources of energy, regard must still be had for the communities that are reliant on oil and gas for living purposes and economic means. In many states legislation is in place for a greener transition in such communities, however, mechanisms or ways to realise the transition are not clear.

Source: Social Science Research Network dated 2021

https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3825778

PRIVATE SECTOR NEEDED TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS – A research paper by the University of Utah stresses the importance of the private sector playing its part in improving certain business practices which perpetuate climate change. The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development's goals are interlinked and when private sectors lend a hand, certain acts can meet more than one goal. For instance, entities should

manage their use of natural resources and create safer as well as sustainable alternatives. This will fuel economic development, whilst leaving more resources for the eradication of poverty.

Source: Social Science Research Network dated 2021

https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3831562

NATIONAL

GENERAL

RAMAPHOSA PRIORITISES CLIMATE CHANGE FOR SOUTH AFRICA – The SA President Cyril Ramaphosa, joined President Joe Biden and other world leaders at the 40 World Leaders virtual summit. President Cyril Ramaphosa stated that COVID-19 and a prolonged drought in the Eastern, Northern and Western Cape provinces have emphasised the impact of climate change. In addition, last year's rains broke the seven years of drought but also brought devastation including floods, water shortages, crop failures and a negative impact on farming and food security. Therefore, steps to respond to global warming will include building infrastructure to protect communities from rising sea levels or regular flooding as well as planting more drought-resistant crops.

Source: EWN dated 26 April 2021

<https://ewn.co.za/2021/04/26/ramaphosa-tackling-climate-change-a-national-priority-for-sa>

THE PRESIDENT VOWS SOUTH AFRICA'S CARBON EMISSION WILL DECLINE 10 YEARS EARLIER – President Cyril Ramaphosa has stated that South Africa will start decreasing its carbon emissions from 2025 instead of 2035. In addition, a greater reliance for the country's energy will be placed on renewable energy with the country having generation capacity of over 17 gigawatts of renewable energy by 2030.

Source: News24 dated 22 April 2021

<https://www.news24.com/fin24/economy/south-africa/ramaphosa-sas-carbon-emissions-will-decline-10-years-early-20210422>

SASOL AND AIR LIQUIDE PROCURE 900MW OF RENEWABLE ENERGY – Plans have been announced of the joint procurement undertaken and to be issued by Sasol and Air Liquide for 900MW of renewable- energy capacity from independent power producers by 2030. It is said to be the largest renewable-energy procurement deal in the private sector of South Africa and the procured service provider would supply Sasol's operations in Secunda, Mpumalanga.

Source: Engineering News dated 13 April 2021

<https://www.engineeringnews.co.za/article/sasol-and-air-liquide-initiate-first-phase-of-900-mw-renewables-procurement-process-2021-04-13>

SASOL PARTNERS WITH TOYOTA SA TO DEVELOP GREEN HYDROGEN MOBILITY – It has been announced that this partnership between Sasol and Toyota SA will be to create mobility corridors on specific highways i.e. the N3 Durban/Johannesburg, heavy-duty, hydrogen-powered long-haul trucks will have a designated lane. The end goal being that there will be a “*production of renewable carbon feedstock at scale,*” according to Sasol's CEO Fleetwood Grobler.

Source: Daily Maverick dated 14 April 2021

<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-04-14-hydrogen-mobility-corridor-sasol-and-toyota-boldly-go-in-search-of-the-holy-grail-of-green-fuel-in-sa/>

NEDBANK FORGE A ZERO FOSSIL- FUEL EXPOSURE BY 2045 – The Nedbank Group released its new energy policy in which it committed to reduce its exposure to any fossil fuels to zero by 2045. In addition, it has committed that there will be an increase in the investment of renewable-energy with at least

R2 billion in financing by 2022. This is in support of an existing R50 billion which has been committed to South Africa's Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme which is resuming this year after a seven-year interruption.

Source: Engineering News dated 22 April 2021

<https://www.engineeringnews.co.za/article/nedbank-makes-pioneering-zero-fossil-fuel-exposure-by-2045-pledge-2021-04-22>

BARBARA CREECY INITIATES THE END OF LION BREEDING – The High Level Panel report on the “*management, breeding, hunting, trade and handling of elephant, lion, leopard and rhinoceros*” and its recommendations has been released. This report outlines the efforts made to contain rhino and elephant poaching which were previously lucrative industries. In addition, South Africa will not lobby for the lifting of current global restrictions on the trade of rhino horns and elephant ivory. Ms Creecy stated that she would consider the majority's view which advocates for ending the breeding of lions for hunting and commercial purposes as well as the trade of their bones. This after a consideration of the negative impact had on the authentic wild hunting industry and how the trade in lions could potentially stimulate the poaching and illegal trade of lions.

Source: Bloomberg dated 2 May 2021

https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-05-02/lion-breeding-bone-sales-should-end-in-south-africa-minister?cmpid=BBD050321_GREENDAILY&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_term=210503&utm_campaign=greendaily

CATO RIDGE MERCURY TOXIC WASTE FINALLY DEALT WITH – Three decades later, the mercury recovery plant near Cato Ridge is now having its toxic waste dealt with. The long wait is despite the fact a commission of inquiry was held after several emaciated chemical workers died from being exposed to the poisonous mercury fumes and nearby sludges. Scientist had, prior to this incident highlighted issues with the plant after grossly deformed tadpoles were found nearby. The estimated cost of the clean-up and shipping of deadly waste to Switzerland for treatment will cost the British- based multinational group R174 million.

Source: Daily Maverick dated 17 April 2021

<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-04-17-at-long-last-thors-poisonous-mercury-is-getting-cleaned-up/>

“SEWAGE WORKS THAT SERVE BIG CITIES RUN INTO TROUBLE WHEN THE CITIES GROW UP AROUND THEM” ROSE GEORGE – An admission by the national DWS shows that at least 56% of South Africa's treatments plants (1,150 plants) are in a “*poor or critical condition*”. It is held that larger quantities of poorly treated or completely untreated sewage are filling rivers and residential areas, especially townships. The investigation showed that from 910 municipality-run wastewater plants, 50% of them failed to achieve minimum effluent standards in 2020. It has become not only an environmental issue, but also a health disaster that is calling for the state's attention.

Source: Daily Maverick dated 26 April 2021

<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-04-26-south-africas-rivers-of-sewage-more-than-half-of-sas-treatment-works-are-failing/>

MINING PRODUCTION LIFTS marginally by 0,8% – In the last 12 months, the mining industry has been on a 3,4% year-on-year downward trajectory, however, February's mining production has positively been lifted. The growth has been fuelled by the production of: iron ore up 65,7%; manganese production 21,6%; other on metallic minerals 12,6%. Finally, despite this, the production of coal and gold has declined by 19,3% and 8,7% respectively.

Source: News24 dated 13 April 2021

<https://www.news24.com/fin24/economy/mining-reports-first-year-on-year-increase-in-12-months-20210413>

“A TREE IS OUR MOST INTIMATE CONTACT WITH NATURE.” GEORGE NAKASHIMA –The government's plans for the construction of its “Musina-Makhado special economic zone” are underway which proposes to uproot more than 109 000 trees including the protected mopane, baobab and marula trees. This has raised concerns with resident Mr Isaac Sekwama who holds that the trees are a part of the area's culture, held to be sacred and have a historical importance.

Source: Mail & Guardian dated 20 March 2021

<https://mg.co.za/environment/2021-03-20-plan-to-uproot-100-000-trees-in-limpopo-sacrilege-says-baobab-expert/>

BID WINDOW 5 OF THE REIPPPP OPEN FOR QUALIFICATIONS AND PROPOSALS – The RFP was issued on the 12 April 2021 and the bid is open for proposals.

Source: Times Live dated 15 April 2021

<https://www.timeslive.co.za/sunday-times/business/2021-04-15-native-request-for-qualifications-and-proposals-bid-window-5-of-the-reipppp-programme/>

Supporting source: The Department of Mineral Resources and Energy

<https://www.dmr.gov.za/tenders/tender/id/17992>

Supporting source: South African Alternative Energy Association

<https://www.saaea.org/renewable-energy-news/ipp-bid-window-5-now-available>

PUBLICATIONS

REGULATION OF MEAT CONSUMPTION IN SOUTH AFRICA – A recent study has suggested that the environmental harm caused by human activities in the production of meat can be mitigated by establishing innovative regulations and methods that will decrease the high consumption of meat as well as encourage humans to engage in alternative options. The author's propose that a meat tax in South Africa will help decrease the demand for meat due to the increase in price as humans will be likely to consume it less.

Source: Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal dated 2021

<https://journals.assaf.org.za/index.php/per/article/view/7519>

CAPE TOWN'S INLAND WATER QUALITY IN THE LAST 30Y EARS – The City of Cape Town has released its inland waters quality report and discussed the standard of living of persons surrounding the inland waters, especially in informal settlements and the recent quality of the water. For instance, in 2019 By- Law contraventions accounted for 76% sewage spills and only 24% accounted for infrastructure condition constraints. The report found that the general quality of most inland water has declined in approximately the last 30 years due to construction, manufacturing waste and water treatment processes.

Source: Ground Up dated 2021

https://www.groundup.org.za/media/uploads/documents/ct_inland_water_quality_report_summary3.pdf

CONFERENCES AND OTHER EVENTS

ONLINE COURSES

IMBEWU is offering an **ONLINE ENVIRONMENTAL LAW UPDATE** training course. For more information visit our website: <https://imbewu.co.za/services/> or email: sam@imbewu.co.za.

NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL

UNEP AT 50 DIALOGUE WITH INGER ANDERSEN: 7 May 2021 (Webinar). For more information visit: <https://www.unep.org/events/online-event/unep-50-dialogue-inger-andersen>

POWER GEN AFRICA: 11 – 13 May 2021 (Cape Town)

WORLD BEE DAY: 20 May 2021

IMBEWU'S NEW ONLINE Safety, Health & Environmental (SHE) Legal Register Platform. This new SHE Legal Register offering is contemporary and streamlined for easy access with secure passwords, regular updates, easy navigation, explanations of SHE legislation relevant to your operation, access to a comprehensive searchable SHE legislation database and user-specific functions such as bookmarks.

For more information contact sam@imbewu.co.za or visit <https://imbewu.co.za/she-electronic-legal-registers/>

IMBEWU's environmental note: 10 Easy Ways to Stay Green in 2021 <https://www.themanual.com/culture/easy-ways-to-go-green/>

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