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SUSTAINABILITY NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2025

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<https://imbewu.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Monthly-SHE-leg-update-Jun25.pdf>

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NATIONAL

CABINET APPROVES TERBUFOS BAN – Civil society organisations have welcomed Cabinet's decision to ban Terbufos, a highly hazardous organophosphate pesticide, following the deaths of six children in October 2024 who consumed contaminated snacks in Naledi, Soweto. Commonly used in South African agriculture, Terbufos poses serious health risks, including long-term neurological damage. In June 2025, Cabinet reviewed findings from an inter-ministerial committee, supported by a ministerial advisory council, and tasked the Department of Agriculture with leading a national consultation on the ban. This aligns with a 2010 government policy to phase out toxic pesticides in favour of safer alternatives.

The South African People's Tribunal on AgroToxins (SAPToA) praised the ban as a crucial step in transforming an agricultural system marked by inequality, weak regulation, and worker exploitation. SAPToA and other advocacy groups also criticised South Africa's outdated pesticide legislation, calling it inconsistent with the Constitution and Bill of Rights and too heavily skewed in favour of industry interests. Civil society is now calling for a structured, transparent phase-out of all 194 highly hazardous pesticides still registered in the country. They reject industry-led timelines and demand the creation of a public pesticide database, asserting that access to such information is a constitutional right.

The South African Human Rights Commission hailed the decision as a significant advance in upholding the rights to health, clean water, a safe environment, and adequate food.

Source: <https://mg.co.za/the-green-guardian/2025-06-17-toxic-pesticide-ban-a-victory-for-people-and-environmental-justice-say-activists/>

EASTERN CAPE FLOODING EXPOSES GAPS IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT – The recent flooding in the Eastern Cape, which claimed 92 lives and affected nearly 5,000 people, highlights critical weaknesses in South Africa's disaster management system. Despite strong legislation and a multi-tiered early warning system, poor implementation, limited capacity, and communication breakdowns—especially in vulnerable communities—have left many exposed.

South Africa's early warning system begins with the South African Weather Service and filters through provincial and local authorities. However, warnings often fail to reach those most at risk, particularly in informal settlements and during night-time events. Meteorologist Lehlohonolo Thobelo has called for stronger community engagement and a shift from reactive to proactive disaster response.

Though South Africa is a signatory to the UN's Early Warnings for All Initiative, challenges remain. In cities like Johannesburg, unchecked development in high-risk areas continues, increasing exposure. Experts stress the need for risk reduction measures such as enforcing development regulations, integrating flood lines into planning, and appointing local community representatives to improve emergency response.

To truly build resilience, South Africa must move beyond emergency relief and focus on planning, prevention, and community empowerment before disasters strike.

Source: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2025-06-19-eastern-cape-floods-why-sas-disaster-management-and-legislation-failed/>

2025 UN OCEAN CONFERENCE - The 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3) was held in Nice, France, from 9–13 June 2025. The conference sought to drive transformative actions to address the world's pressing ocean-related challenges. The theme for this year was "Accelerating Action and Mobilising All Actors to Conserve and Sustainably Use the Ocean."

UNOC3 featured high-level plenary sessions where UN Member States announced their commitments to ocean protection. In addition, Ocean Action Panels convened a wide range of stakeholders—including Member States, UN agencies, international organisations, financial institutions, the private sector, academia, non-governmental and civil society organisations, as well as representatives of Indigenous Peoples and local communities—to exchange actionable solutions and foster global cooperation.

A key outcome of the conference was the adoption of the Nice Ocean Action Plan, an intergovernmental, action-oriented political declaration, accompanied by a series of voluntary commitments.

At the conference, Dion George, the Minister responsible for environmental affairs, signed the Agreement under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Treaty). Currently, only around 1% of international waters—those beyond any national jurisdiction—are protected. With growing threats such as deep-sea mining, overfishing, and climate change, the urgency to safeguard our oceans has never been greater.

The BBNJ Treaty provides a legal framework for the establishment of marine protected areas on the high seas, equitable sharing of benefits derived from marine genetic resources, and regulation of extractive activities.

Source: <https://bd.pressreader.com/article/281578066621078>

INTERNATIONAL

DEVELOPMENT BANKS TO INVEST €3 BILLION TO TACKLE PLASTIC POLLUTION - At the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3), the second phase of the Clean Oceans Initiative was launched. As part of this renewed commitment to ocean conservation, the European Investment Bank (EIB)—alongside development banks from France, Germany, Spain, and Italy—pledged a total investment of €3 billion to tackle marine pollution.

The initiative focuses on improving the management of solid waste, wastewater, and stormwater, with early-stage projects including:

- Upgrading wastewater treatment systems in Sri Lanka;
- Strengthening solid waste management in Togo; and
- Implementing flood protection measures in Benin.

Beyond direct environmental infrastructure, the initiative also seeks to address upstream sources of pollution. This includes supporting the development of innovative packaging solutions and enhancing recycling systems, helping to reduce the risks and costs associated with new technologies, packaging, and product design. Efforts are also underway to expand participation from development banks in other regions, particularly Asia and Latin America, which are among the largest sources of ocean plastic pollution. The Asian Development Bank has already joined the initiative, and further international collaboration is expected, with countries set to meet again in August to advance global action on plastic waste.

The urgency of the crisis is underscored by UN projections, which warn that if current trends continue, plastic waste entering the oceans could triple—from approximately 11 million metric tons in 2021 to as much as 37 million metric tons per year by 2040. Of particular concern is the dramatic increase in microplastics, which have contaminated every major ocean, as well as the soil and air, ultimately making their way into animals, plants, and humans. Now more than ever, global cooperation is critical. The escalating threat of plastic pollution demands decisive, coordinated action to safeguard the health of our oceans—and the planet as a whole—for future generations.

Source: <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/sci-tech/2025-06-10-development-banks-to-invest-at-least-r60bn-by-2030-in-ocean-plastics-fight/>

NORTHERN IRELAND COMPANY DIRECTORS SENTENCED FOR ILLEGAL WASTE DUMPING AT MOBUOY LANDFILL - Two company directors were recently sentenced to prison for illegally dumping over one million tonnes of waste at the Mobuoy landfill site in Northern Ireland. The site, operated by City Industrial Waste (CIW) Ltd, is located near the River Faughan—a crucial source of drinking water for the surrounding community. While the Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has reported no evidence of contamination so far, the estimated cost of cleaning up the site ranges from £17 million to £700 million. In response, Environment Minister Andrew Muir has announced plans for a public consultation on the proposed remediation strategy.

On 6 June 2025, the Crown Court sentenced two men involved in the illegal dumping: Paul Doherty, a director at Campsie Sand and Gravel (CSG), was sentenced to 12 months in prison after pleading guilty to seven waste-related offences committed between 2007 and 2013; Gerry Farmer, a director at CIW, received a 21-month sentence for three offences between 2011 and 2013. During sentencing, the presiding judge emphasised that those who commit

environmental crimes motivated by greed can no longer expect to evade serious consequences. Meanwhile, sentencing for CIW Ltd itself has been postponed as investigations continue under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2022.

The convictions of the Mobuoy landfill directors represent a critical move toward holding individuals personally accountable for environmental violations. As clean-up efforts progress and further investigations unfold, this case serves as a stark reminder of the lasting impact of environmental negligence. It also highlights the urgent need for stronger regulatory enforcement and coordinated political action to prevent future incidents and safeguard vital natural resources like the River Faughan.

Source: <https://www.pinsentmasons.com/out-law/news/custodial-sentences-directors-illegal-dumping-northern-ireland>

IMBEWU'S ONLINE Safety, Health & Environmental (SHE) Legal Registers serve to link environmental and health & safety legal requirements, not only to clients' specific activities, aspects and risks, but also to legislation and legal commentaries. Our state-of-the-art online electronic SHE Legal Registers are cost effective, contemporary and streamlined for easy access with secure passwords, easy navigation and a search engine. Access to a comprehensive searchable SHE legislation database (which is updated monthly), is included as well as site-specific documentation.

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



28 July 2025- World Nature Conservation Day <https://www.nationaldaycalendar.com/international/world-conservation-day-july-28>

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