



Leaders in Environmental Management

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R11m Grant to Rid SA of obsolete pesticides

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The South African Government on Tuesday signed an R11-million grant agreement with the World Bank to help finance the disposal of obsolete pesticides in the country.

The deal, negotiated by Environmental Affairs and Tourism Deputy Minister Rejoice Mabudafhasi, was signed by Minister Marthinus van Schalkwyk and World Bank country director to South Africa Ritva Reinikka in Pretoria.

Mabudafhasi, who witnessed the signing, said the project would assist the department in ridding South Africa of obsolete pesticides and to prevent a future re-occurrence of the problem.

The agreement was a demonstration of the government's commitment to creating a safe and healthy environment for present and future generations, she said. If this step was not taken now, pesticides would remain in the environment and finally find their way into food products, she said.

The country was mobilising the agricultural sector, the pesticide industry and government agencies to identify all obsolete pesticide stocks in the country. "When all these are found, they will be repackaged and transported to a central collection point where international and national standards will be employed in destroying them in an environmentally sound manner."

In order to make sure that South Africans bought into the programme to clear it of obsolete pesticides, an amnesty would be in place while an inventory, and the collection, of old stock was done.

"Non-disclosure of pesticide stock will be a missed opportunity for people who have stockpiles, because the Africa Stockpiles Programme (ASP) will also look at the legal framework which will ensure that accumulation of obsolete stockpiles does not recur," she said.

An education campaign would be undertaken about the dangers of pesticides. The agreement was the first phase of a programme to rid Africa of up to 50 000 tons of obsolete pesticide waste.

South Africa was at the forefront of designing and implementing regional programmes to conserve the environment. "South Africa and the World Bank are currently reviewing the country's environmental assessment policies. The aim of this is to be able to apply them to future Bank-supported projects in South Africa," said Reinikka.