



From the UDM's Manifesto Pages 14 & 15

YOUR ENVIRONMENT

*Make the environment
a priority today,
or our children and
their children
will face
great hardship.*

*Identify and reward
those who
save our environment*

*Important role for
the media in raising
environmental
awareness*

*Ensure that every
South African
understands our
quality of life depends
on the environment*

6 PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT: FOR ALL SOUTH AFRICANS

The environment issue is of critical national and international importance. The threats to the survival of our environment and the people who inhabit it make the issue a top national priority.

The practice of proper use of land and resources is understood, but high levels of poverty in many parts of the country have led to the destruction of the environment; soil erosion, water pollution, and deforestation are widespread. As a result desertification is threatening our country. It is critical that we uplift the poor and rescue our environment from permanent destruction. At the same time storms and adverse weather are becoming commonplace due to global climate change. This further exacerbates the threat to our environment.

The socio-economic implications of the destruction or degradation of our environment imposes a serious obligation on everybody to play his or her part to protect our environment. Environmental concerns require a holistic and non-political approach because it affects all players, irrespective of social standing. Any activities by anybody that harm the environment impact on the lives of all people of South Africa.

The task of saving our environment calls for the elevation of the problem as a priority that warrants a "Marshall Plan" to save our natural heritage by identifying, building and rewarding individuals, institutions as well as community-based organisations to rescue and conserve our natural heritage. A specific opportunity exists here to make use of the many community radio stations. They are doing sterling work on reflecting community issues, and are well-placed to raise awareness about environmental, health and related issues. Government advertisements towards this would also help to make these stations economically viable and break the artificial advertising monopoly of the SABC.

This entails broadening the knowledge, and awareness of environmental issues and commitment to its protection and development to encompass the poor who may have previously viewed issues of environment as a preoccupation of the wealthy. It must be made known to all our people that the promotion of environmental concerns and strategies is geared towards the improvement of the quality of lives of all our people without exception.

We must defuse the potential conflict between the imperatives of conservation and those of resource-poor communities. We need to link conservation with socio-economic development, by allowing communities to have sustainable access to the life supporting and income-earning potential of nature reserves and other protected areas.

Population and resources, and land distribution will remain areas of challenge and opportunity. The environmental and socio-political needs are to deal with the material and perceived legacy of apartheid. In environmental management terms, this might mean a shift in focus to living and working environments, and to land reform.

The UDM supports sustainable environmental development, meaning that the prosperity we create today must not leave future generations without useful resources. The UDM believes that, through the implementation of bio-diversity programmes, thousands of jobs can be created. The UDM believes that it is possible to generate job and business opportunities whilst being environmentally responsible.

A UDM Government will pursue the following objectives: Tax incentives must be provided to the private sector and other institutions that invest in the development of technologies for conservation and sustainable use of bio-diversity programmes.

Similarly more active enforcement of the environmental law is required. Individuals or organisations that contravene these laws must be penalised.

The massive number of environmental laws and regulations must immediately be consolidated into one concise and effective law.

In South Africa in particular, and in the world in general, we are facing three major environmental crises: climate change, water scarcity as well as the energy crisis. These three challenges pose massive threats and require concerted National and international responses. A UDM Government would be a champion of these causes locally, on the continent and in international forums.

We don't need to choose between development and conservation

Make sustainable development a strategy followed by the state and every other sector

Tax incentives for environmental research and technology

Simplify environmental law and thus improve enforcement

Act today to save tomorrow

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