

Activists to share anti-offshore drilling message

SOUTH Durban Community Environmental Alliance (SDCEA) hosts a meeting on Tuesday, 14 November to highlight offshore oil and gas exploration.

The meeting will take place at Scottburgh town hall at 5pm.

According to SDCEA, the exploration is bad news for the coastline and marine life. "Oil and gas exploration has been earmarked for the entire SA coastline through operation Phakisa, a project launched by President Jacob Zuma to use our oceans as a resource for offshore drilling.

This has the potential to produce petroleum along our coastline and create a mess by producing other toxic substances including mercury, lead, arsenic and barium. These toxins are devastating for the health of fish, wildlife and people who live and feed off the coast," said SDCEA director, Desmond D'Sa.

The exploratory oil and gas activities start with seismic testing. These surveys have been found to kill fish eggs and larvae and impair the hearing and health of fish, making them vulnerable to predators and leaving them unable to catch prey, find mates

or communicate with each other, according to SDCEA.

Concerns also centre around the disruption of important migratory patterns. "This is only the beginning, if oil deposits are found, offshore oil rigs will be erected and our oceans and its marine life will be at great risk to oil spills. This will spell disaster for those who eke out their livelihood along the coast," said D'Sa.

Dr Jennifer Olbers of Ezemvelo Wildlife will do a presentation about the dangers and impacts seismic surveys have on the ocean and its marine life. Jennifer has worked closely with SDCEA to ensure this message is spread to as many coastal towns and communities as possible. Samuel Chademana, climate and energy campaign manager at GroundWork, will also present at the meeting on the challenges that people, mammals and business will face along the coastline. His talk will focus on the socio-economic impacts of oil and gas exploration in parts of Africa where it has caused destruction.

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