

Environmentalists demand tougher action against firms destroying nature

[POLITICS](#) / 15 NOVEMBER 2019, 2:12PM / BONGANI HANS



Environmentalists have appealed to Minister Barbara Creecy and her Gabonese counterpart Lee White to be tougher on big industries who are polluting nature. Picture: Brendan Magaar/African News Agency(ANA)

Johannesburg - Environmentalists have appealed to Environmental, Forestry and Fisheries Minister Barbara Creecy and her Gabonese counterpart Lee White to be tougher on big industries who are polluting nature.

Creecy and White were the main speakers at the 17th African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, which would end in Durban on Friday. But they had to adjourn the event for few minutes in order to listen to a group of Groundwork members who protested in front of the Durban's Olive Convention Centre, where the conference took place.

In the memorandum, the protestors told international delegates, who were mostly environmental government ministers from across Africa, to stop corporate and elite from destroying nature for the sake of making profit.

“Develop mechanisms across Africa that will protect those that protect the earth.

“Be bold and lead from an environmental justice perspective and ensure that Africa develops resilience to secure the livelihoods of millions as climate devastate the continent,” read the memorandum.

The conference coincided with this week’s commemoration of 24 years since book writer and environmental activist Ken Saro-Wiwa was sentenced to death by his Nigerian government for campaigning against environmental pollution in the Niger Delta by oil companies.

Both ministers said they would introduce the Groundwork memorandum to the delegates for discussion.

White, who is the Gabonese Forests, Oceans, Environment and Climate Change handed over the presidency of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) to Creecy on Thursday.

He said the man-made climate change was a challenge that the whole world should fight against.

“It (climate change) is now growing much quicker than it usually did in the natural world. Now we have to respond to the human driving climate change,” said White. White, a British environmentalist, was appointed into the Gabonese cabinet in June.

He told the delegates that climate change was visible in most parts of the world such as Australia and Amazon areas that are currently battling with uncontrollable forest fires.

“We see floods in many African countries, we see drought in other parts of Africa.

“As ministers of environment it is up to us to show the responsibility by mobilising the global community against the major challenges of climate change, food insecurity and poverty that we see today,” he said.

Creecy said Africa would have to turn to new technology to advance green economy.

“Renewable energy technology is becoming both more effective and cheaper by the day.

“This is an era when a circular economy is a practical and affordable alternative to the unsustainable take-make-use-dispose model that is the root of many of our current problems,” she said.

Political Bureau