

## **SPEECH BY HELEN ZILLE, MAYOR OF CAPE TOWN**

### **LAUNCH OF ARBOR MONTH 2008 CELEBRATIONS**

**1 SEPTEMBER 2008 – COMPANY’S GARDENS – 18H30**

On behalf of the City of Cape Town, I welcome you to the official launch of our Arbor month programme, and the switch on of our Arbor month lights (at least some of them).

Among other things, this programme aims to have 2010 trees planted by 2010.

This is part of our commitment to promote a healthy environment and beautify the city.

Many of the 800 trees to be planted over the next few weeks will be in the sandy and exposed areas of the city.

We are hoping to reduce the wind erosion and wind damage that the communities living in these areas currently experience, and bring shade in the summer.

By planting trees and providing park and recreational facilities, we also want to create safe and appealing spaces for the children of Cape Town to enjoy.

For example, this month we will launch an Adventure Park in Mouille Point next to the Lighthouse, which will offer recreation for older children. The Adventure Park will incorporate innovatively designed playground equipment for exercise and entertainment.

And we have restored the Pavilion Park next to the Sea Point Pavilion, largely thanks to Rotary Club donations, providing a toddlers playground, designed for young children up to the age of six years old.

Our arbour month programme also supports our goal of making Cape Town a global example of environmental sustainability.

Trees are a critical part of our environment because they absorb carbon gases, which create global warming.

With the combined impact of deforestation and increased carbon emissions creating climate change, every city and every country needs to do its bit to curb global warming.

Consider this – if we don’t act now to slow global warming, we run the risk of Greenland and the West Antarctica Ice Sheets melting substantially, bringing a 20m rise in the average sea level in Cape Town.

This would put large parts of our city underwater.

It would also change our climate, bringing fiercer storms and more floods.

It is fitting that we are holding this event during one of the worst storms to hit Cape Town.

Perhaps we should treat this as a sign of things to come if global warming and climate change continue.

The events on our Arbor month programme, and the indigenous trees we plant, are a small action to support sustainability.

But what matters is that they help raise awareness and educate future generations.

Our City Parks Department is working with our libraries and our various Amenities around the City to promote greater awareness around the importance of planting trees.

Our libraries will display literature posters and leaflets for Arbor Month

And our Sport, Amenities and Recreation Department will be working with the City Parks staff to create environmental awareness among our youth by holding clean up campaigns and other activities.

I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of our Electricity Services and Environment Resource Management Department with their efforts to promote sustainable use of energy and natural resources.

I thank you.