

# MEDIA RELEASE



## Port of Durban Appeals for Public Support in Fighting Plastic Pollution

**[Durban, South Africa, 25 April 2019]** Transnet National Ports Authority (TNPA) at the Port of Durban has commenced a major clean-up to remove the large volume of waste and vegetation from the port after the recent heavy rains and flooding in KwaZulu-Natal.

The adverse weather caused the usual deluge of plastic and other debris to flow into the port, leaving behind an unsightly scene just days after World Earth Day was observed globally on 22 April.

Acting Durban Port Manager, Nokuzola Nkowane, said all Transnet Operating Divisions were carrying out assessments to establish the full extent of damage caused by the storm.

"Our thoughts are with all those affected by the recent heavy rains and flooding. We would also like to appeal to the public to please help curb plastic pollution as this causes huge problems when the debris flows into the harbour," she said.

She said the port's pollution control teams were on site tackling the debris within port waters, aided by clean-up teams from SpillTech, Drizit and ZMK Enterprises. Progress is slow due to the sheer volume of material that still continues to wash in.

The debris included large logs that posed a threat to the safe navigation of the harbour craft which are used to guide vessels safely in and around the port. The port has been fully operational however, the ingress of waste impacted on vessel movements and as of midday on Wednesday three vessels were unable to berth or sail in the Maydon Wharf precinct, Nkowane confirmed.

"The combined catchment area of the rivers, canals and storm-water drainage systems that drain into the port is over 200km<sup>2</sup> in size. The unfortunate reality is the port waters are on the receiving end of the large volume of litter, effluent and sewer that is discharged into the storm-water reticulation system within the catchment," said Nkowane.

"We must all take responsibility for the well-being of the ocean and coastal environment, and as TNPA we want to help create awareness and promote sustainable practices for the benefit of present and future generations," she said.

TNPA has been in regular engagements with the eThekweni Municipality regarding the interventions required to address the ingress of waste and effluent into the port from the municipal stormwater network which drains a significant portion of the Durban metropolitan area.

The port's pollution control department shared the following tips for the public to help in tackling the massive plastic problem:

- Avoid single-use plastic, which is any plastic item used only once, such as plastic straws and plastic packaging. Plastic is a material that lasts for hundreds of years, yet is often used for only a short time before it is discarded.
- Get into the habit of recycling and avoid throwing away recyclable items as part of your normal weekly refuse disposal. Items that can and should be recycled include glass, cardboard and paper, tin and aluminium cans (for example from canned food and cool drink), certain plastics such as bottles for drinks and cleaning products. Items should be rinsed before being put into a recycling bin.
- Get involved in clean-ups, such as those arranged by #CleanBlueLagoon, KZN Beach Clean Up and Durban Bay Cleanup.
- Observe environmental days such as World Earth Day on 22 April (held under the theme 'End Plastic Pollution' in 2018), National Marine Week in the second week of October (under the theme 'Plastic is Drastic' in 2018) and World Environment Day on 5 June (under the theme "Beat Plastic Pollution" in 2018)
- Support organisations such as Durban Green Corridors, Durban Partnership against Plastic Pollution (D-PAPP) and Greenpeace Africa which help to fight plastic and other pollution.

**Ends**

## Images

Below: The Port of Durban has been badly affected by the large volume of waste and vegetation flowing into port waters after the recent heavy rains and flooding.



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Below: Clean-up teams are working hard to clear the debris.



### **About Transnet National Ports Authority**

Transnet National Ports Authority (TNPA) is one of five operating divisions of Transnet SOC Ltd. The National Ports Authority is responsible for the safe, effective and efficient economic functioning of the national port system, which it manages in a landlord capacity. It provides port infrastructure and marine services at the eight commercial seaports in South Africa – Richards Bay, Durban, Saldanha, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, East London, Mossel Bay and Ngqura. It operates within a legislative and regulatory environment and is governed by the National Ports Act (Act No. 12 of 2005). For more information visit [www.transnetnationalportsauthority.net](http://www.transnetnationalportsauthority.net).

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