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**ENVIRONMENTAL AND CIVIC EDUCATION HIKE: 'ACTIVE CITIZENRY AND POLICY: EDUCATE, EMPOWER, AND DO'.**

National Youth Network ACTIVATE! Change Drivers uses Human Rights Month to host an Environmental and Civic Hiking Activation. The network-led scenic hike will be held in Kibler Park, Gauteng, and will begin at 08h00 on Saturday the 16<sup>th</sup> of March 2024. The hike takes place amidst the urgent global challenge of climate change and deteriorating democracies around the world and aims to focus on scrutinizing the stances of political parties on climate change and environmental policies and facilitating a platform of engagement on how citizens can be responsive to these.

The Hike is a parcel of ongoing efforts by the youth network to capacitate young people and their communities into becoming active citizens who are informed about environmental and policy matters that have an impact on their lived experiences. The day will consist of young people and their communities, engaging in discussions and fun ice-breaker activities along the trail, here attendees will be led through Interactive points that will prompt reflections on political parties' environmental commitments, drawing the crowds into consideration of their role as active citizens, five days ahead of Human Rights day and nearly 60 days ahead of the 2024 South African General Elections taking place on the 29<sup>th</sup> of May 2024.

“The Civic Education Hiking Activation cuts across being merely a reaction to the urgent global challenges of climate change and faltering democracies; it embodies a proactive approach towards cultivating informed and empowered citizens”, Executive Director for programs at ACTIVATE! Change Drivers Tebogo Suping.

Early this year, while delivering the last State of the Nation Address (SONA) of the sixth administration to a joint sitting of Parliament, President Cyril Ramaphosa said the government has decided to establish a Climate Change Response Fund to counter the severe effect of global warming and climate change.

“This will bring together all spheres of government and the private sector in a collaborative effort to build resilience and respond to the impacts of climate change,” he said.

During his address, the President mentioned the floods in KwaZulu-Natal, heatwaves in the Northern Cape, wildfires in the Western Cape, the drought in the Eastern Cape, and frequent alarming storms in Gauteng. “While each of these events has left its mark, our country has weathered every storm. Yes, we have the scars to show. But in every case South Africans have been resolute,” he said

Reflecting on the campaign, network coordinator Lerato Mokopanela said “As a youth network, we intend on using youth-friendly platforms and venues to promote civic education and the importance of active engagement in political concerns, and what better way to do it than on a hiking path? Our goal is to ensure that young people are not excluded, but rather become active participants in governance, armed with the knowledge to make informed decisions, particularly as we approach the 2024 General Election”.

The activation has a set of themes and objectives centered on the Sustainable Development Goal 13 - Climate Action that include but are not limited to:

1. Raise awareness about climate change and how it intersects with youth issues.
2. Analyse and converse on the effectiveness of political parties' environmental policies and manifestos.
3. Foster informed civic engagement and dialogue, acknowledging the duality of climate and socio-political challenges.
4. Mobilise young people to exercise their voting rights with a nuanced understanding of environmental and political interconnections.

### **Did you know?**

*Did you know that the establishment of the Climate Change Respond Fund comes soon after the passing of the Climate Change Bill last year and government participation in various climate-change-related multinational platforms, including the COP28 in the United Arab Emirates in December 2023.*

For more information on the campaign follow the network on: Twitter: @ActivateZA | Instagram: @Activate\_za | Facebook & LinkedIn: Activate Change Drivers

Siyashesha Leadership Incubator NPC Reg No 2011/000482/08 | ETDP SETA accreditation N°: ETDP10912

CEO: Siphелеle Chirwa Executive Directors: Abueng Tebogo Suping,  
Non-Executive Directors: Yolande Wright, Janet Jobson, Injairu Kulundu, Nariman Laattoe

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**\*\*\*ENDS\*\***

About ACTIVATE! Change Drivers

*ACTIVATE! Change Drivers is a multisectoral youth development programme with a national network that in the past 12 years, has delivered a leadership development programme to over 4551 young people from across the country, with tools to enable platforms for youth leaders to connect, share ideas and be empowered to become active change drivers in their communities.*

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