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21 February 2024

## **South African Weather Service reaches out to vulnerable groups in Hammanskraal, workshops community leaders on the dissemination of severe weather warnings**

The South African Weather Service (SAWS) will this week meet vulnerable groups and local leaders in Hammanskraal, north of Pretoria, in separate engagements aimed at equipping the community with crucial information that could help save lives, livelihoods and property from the effects of severe weather events.

South Africa is among the southern African countries that are susceptible to hazardous weather and negative climate change impacts. These include severe floods, droughts, tropical cyclones, storms, and heat waves.

In recent times, hundreds of households in areas surrounding Hammanskraal have had to contend with instances of heavy rainfall, leading to severe cases of flooding. Lephengville, Mandela, Suurman and Majaneng are some among the areas in question.

Consequently, there is a need for the community to be WeatherSMART. A WeatherSMART community is one that is **Safe, More informed, Alert, Resilient**, and has **Timely** access to relevant weather information and services. The two engagements in Hammanskraal seek to give effect to this ideal of WeatherSMART communities.

In the first event, a workshop to be held with community leaders on Thursday, ideas on how to effectively disseminate warnings of extreme weather events to residents who are at risk of being affected negatively will be brainstormed. A communication chain that can be used to ensure that weather warnings sent by the SAWS can easily reach households and be well understood will be developed.

“This workshop will also assist in determining a suitable method for ensuring that weather warnings reach this community in a timely manner so that the community can take necessary actions to move out of harm’s way,” explained, Chief Forecaster at the SAWS, Ms Elizabeth Viljoen.

The second event, a community outreach programme to be addressed by the SAWS Chief Executive Officer, Mr Ishaam Abader, will see vulnerable groups such as the elderly, the differently abled and the

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youth being empowered with information on the different types of severe weather events and the precautionary measures that they can take in times of such events.

They will also hear from the representatives of Disaster Management Authorities and intermediary organisations such as Red Cross. It is envisaged that this will improve the community's resilience to severe weather events and its adaptation to the effects of climate change.

The events will take place as follows:

#### Workshop with community leasers

- Date: Thursday, 22 February 2024
- Time: 09:00
- Venue: Ritsako Game Lodge, Dinokeng Game Reserve

#### Community outreach programme

- Date: Friday, 23 February 2024
- Time: 09:00
- Venue: Mandela Hall, Hammanskraal

The two events are funded by the Weather and Climate Information Services (WISER) programme. WISER seeks to generate novel weather information and ensure that this is communicated and used for disaster risk reduction decision-making. It is led by the Met Office in the United Kingdom (UK), commissioned by the UK government's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), and supported by UK aid from the British people.

The SAWS is an entity of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) and derives its mandate from the South African Weather Service Act (No 8 of 2001 as amended). It is tasked with providing timely and accurate scientific data in the field of meteorology to the broader South African society.

Journalists wishing to cover the events are requested to confirm attendance with Ms Musiiwa Denga on [Musiiwa.Denga@weathersa.co.za](mailto:Musiiwa.Denga@weathersa.co.za).

ENDS

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