

A CALL TO STOP ILLEGAL SAND MINING BY THE COMMUNITIES

Zenzile Nhlangwini

Mbombela Local Municipality - The community of Siligane village near Bhuga have had enough with illegal sand mining, they decided to voice their concerns to the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs, during a Sand Mining Awareness Campaign.

The Department organised a Sand Mining LandCare Awareness Campaign at Siligane Village, aimed at raising awareness to the community and farmers about dangers caused by illegal sand mining and to educate them about the rules and regulations of Sand Mining, Sand Mining Applications, Sand mining permits and rehabilitations. It was also conducted to encourage the community and farmers not to allow people to sand mine on the fields and grazing areas.

Residents of Siligane reported that more than 80 trucks pass by every day to sand mine, and some of them do not even have permits to do so. They said due to the high demand of sand the area, the perpetrators have started mining just by the side of the road leaving deadly pits dangerous for children and animals. They say once they are done, the people responsible simply drive off without closing down or levelling the holes.

The Department has called on community members and other interested stakeholders to stand up against the scourge of illegal sand mining, because of its impact on the environment. "We must all do something to stop the scourge of illegal sand mining; it is bad for our environment, it causes erosion. We urge farmers to stop selling their fields for sand mining because honestly, sand mining destroys the farming fields. If we let this trend to continue, we will run out of land for farming and for building houses", said Mr Sam Maluleka, Chief Director for Environmental Services.