

## Amos Masondo

*Nkosiyakhe Amos Masondo*, born on April 21, 1953, in Louwsburg, KwaZulu-Natal, is a distinguished South African political figure whose legacy in urban development and environmental sustainability remains a defining feature of his career. Raised in Soweto, Masondo's activism for social justice led to his imprisonment on Robben Island from 1975 to 1981.

Masondo served as the Executive Mayor of Johannesburg from 2000 to 2011, where he spearheaded transformative initiatives in urban greening and sustainable development. His signature achievement, the **Greening Soweto Legacy Project**, involved planting over 200,000 trees, refurbishing parks, and beautifying urban spaces in historically marginalised areas.

This initiative improved the city's environmental health and fostered economic opportunities and community engagement.

His leadership earned Johannesburg multiple international accolades, including Gold Awards at the **UN LivCom Awards** for projects like the Greening Soweto initiative, Bridging the Green Divide, XtremePark Makeovers, and the redevelopment of Thokoza Park. In recognition of his environmental contributions, the **UNEP Green Award** was presented to him in 2008.

Masondo's commitment to sustainability extends globally, notably through his presidency of the **International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI)** and his advocacy for local governments' role in addressing global environmental challenges. His influence continued as Chairperson of South Africa's **National Council of Provinces** from 2019 to 2024.

Masondo's work remains a powerful reminder of how urban greening can catalyse social and economic change. The tree-lined streets of Johannesburg, especially in Soweto, stand as a lasting testament to his leadership, which has redefined the city's relationship with its environment.

A true champion for Greening, Amos Masondo's legacy is etched in the tree-lined streets of marginalised areas and the hearts of the communities he uplifted. His unwavering dedication to environmental justice continues to inspire future generations to cultivate a greener, more equitable world.

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