

**Ref:02/1/5/2**

**MINISTER**

**QUESTION NO. 2978 FOR WRITTEN REPLY: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

A draft reply to **Mr T Z Hadebe (DA)** to the above-mentioned question is enclosed for your consideration.

**MS NOSIPHO NGCABA**

**DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

**DATE:**

**DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED**

**DR B E E MOLEWA, MP**

**MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

**DATE:**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**(For written reply)**

**QUESTION NO. 2878 {NW3297E}**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO.34 of 2017**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION: 06 October 2017**

**Mr T Z Hadebe (DA) to ask the Minister of Environmental Affairs:**

(1) With regard to the sale of rhino horns by a certain person (name furnished) during the online auction sale held from 21-24 August 2017, what is the total number of (a) permits that were issued by her department, (b) rhino horns or part thereof that were sold;

(2) were any rhino horns or part thereof sold to the international community members; if not, what measures will be implemented to ensure that rhino horns or part thereof never leave the borders of the country; if so, (a) why, (b) what are the names of the buyers and/or bidders? NW3297E

**2978. THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS REPLIES:**

(1)

(a) 1 permit to sell 264 rhinoceros horns and 7 permits to buy rhinoceros horns

(b)No horns or parts thereof

(2)

(a) As indicated above, no horns or parts thereof were sold during the auction. The following measures are in place to prevent and detect illegal activities:

* Environmental Management Inspectors (EMIs) monitor compliance to the buying permits as well as the possession permits that will be applicable to the horns. Through the permitting system we are able to track the movement of the horns and conduct inspections on a regular basis to monitor that these are horns have remained in the country;
* We have improved the ability to track the movement of rhino horn through the implementation of a national database and systems relating to the marking of rhino horn and genetic profiling;
* The Department’s Environmental Management Inspectorate (EMI) works in collaboration with other government agencies such as the South African Police Service and SARS Customs at international airports and at border posts in order to combat the illegal import and export of wildlife products. Having enforcement officials at these ports has assisted in the detection of illegal goods and identification of possible offenders and continue to do so;
* The Department’s Environmental Management Inspectorate (EMI) has been raising awareness and training border officials on initiatives focused on the Illicit International cross border movement of endangered species. This enhances our efforts to build capacity to tackle the problem;
* In 2017 we also commenced with awareness raising sessions for the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) officials protecting the South African border line to ensure that they are aware of the illegal practices related to smuggling of wildlife and that they are able to react should they encounter smugglers;
* The Department works in close co-operation with enforcement officials from neighboring countries to ensure that they are aware of possible illegal trade and that they immediately inform the department in case of any seizures of illegally traded horn and supply us with the necessary information to enable enforcement agencies to investigate;
* Accordingly, we have improved our detection capability at ports of entry and exit by increasing awareness, human capacity, technology and skills which is evident in the increased number of confiscations, arrests and convictions related to wildlife trafficking.
* Regulations pertaining to certain restricted activities involving rhinoceros horn were developed under section 97 of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act No. 10 of 2004) to ensure the strict regulation of the domestic trade in rhino horn. Under section 57(2) of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act No.10 of 2004) specific activities will be prohibit, i.e. the shaving and powdering of rhinoceros horn of *Ceratotherium simum*, *Diceros bicornis bicornis, Diceros bicornis minor* and *Diceros bicornis michaeli.*

1. Not applicable

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