

## **Zelda Jongbloed: Dept of Fisheries needs a DG, not a General**

Honourable Minister something stinks in the fisheries sector's leadership ranks.

The Deputy Director General (DDG) of fisheries did not last a year in the post before returning to Pretoria, leaving the running of this key economic sector for the umpteenth time in the hands of an acting DDG.

The Director General is about to retire.

The Deputy Minister, 'General' Bheki Cele doesn't seem to have a taste for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. He has been hinting that he would rather be a police commissioner than attend to runaway corruption in the fisheries sector, the challenges with the much lauded small scale fisheries plan and the chaos in coastal communities.

While the honourable Cele is meddling in the affairs of the actual Police Commissioner, Rhiya Phiyega, our marine resources are being pillaged on an almost daily basis by poachers with seeming impunity.

Pleks dat hy sy energie en ervaring met polisiëring daaraan wy om leiding te gee om 'n werkbare plan teen stropers te help uitwerk. Die departement het geen effektiewe teen-stroping strategie nie en dit skyn asof daar nòg die kapasiteit, nóg die wil is om die stropers aan bande te lê . Ons hoor op byna weeklikse grondslag van toenemende beslaglegging op duisende tonne gestroopte perlemoen, en'n aanduiding is van hoe oneffektief wetstoepassing ter see in werklikheid is.

We need our abalone in the sea, not in warehouses for poached marine resources. It is a free-for-all out there while compliance has collapsed and the infamous brown envelope has become an integral part of the endemic corruption in the fisheries sector.

Just two days ago treknetters landed tons of yellowtail on Fish Hoek beach, killing hundreds of kilos of bycatch while at the same time at Macassar, treknetters pulled about 500 tons of shad, cob and steenbras from the sea.

What is as worrying is the wanton destruction of our resources and the fact that government compliance officials were seen taking fish from the nets and transporting it in government vehicles.

The Emang Basadi report shows that officials appointed to protect and monitor, are being paid in cash and fish to look the other way, to be party to the irregularities of poaching, overfishing and under-

reporting, to act as informers and tip off poachers about police operations and even illegally fishing themselves.

In a sea of chaos and incompetence which characterises the fisheries sector, the Small Scale Fisheries Plan (SSFP) is being held up as the panacea for all ills.

Ek sal vir u se hoekom ek nie u optimisme oor die volhoubaarheid van die kleinskaalse visseryeplan deel nie.

Ons het doodeenvoudig nie genoeg vis in die see naby die kus om die belofte van armoedeverligting vir 30 000 vissers te vervul nie.(Voorbeelde).

Dit lyk asof u geen insig het in die dinamika in vissergemeenskappe nie.

Die departement se aandrang op die sosialisties geïnspireerde koöperatiewes as voorkeurmodel vir die toekenning van regte is verstommend. Dit ten spyte daarvan dat koöperatiewes in sy huidige vorm die bron is van erge gemeenskapsspanning en verdeeldheid en gekenmerk word deur korrupsie, wanadministrasie en politieke inmenging. Boonop is die aandrang op kooperatiewes as die voertuig waarmee die “goeie storie” versprei word in konflik met grondwetlike voorskrifte van die individu se reg op vrye keuse van assosiasie

Daar is ernstige vrae oor die ekonomiese haalbaarheid van die spesies in die mandjie en die gevaar dat tekortkominge stropery in die hand kan werk. En u weet mos u kan met die huidige gebrek aan kapasiteit, klaar nie vangste effektief monitor of ons bronne beskerm nie.

Die 2013 kwotatoekennings hang nog in die lug en het die departement al miljoene gekos om te probeer regstel. Wat egter verbysterend is, is dat dieselfde mense wat verantwoordelik was vir die ineenstorting van FRAP2013, die sleuteldrywers van die keinskaalse visseryeplan is. Praat van mislukking wat homself herhaal.

You are planning mentorship and training programmes, financial aid packages etc. but fail to show us the budget for all these grand plans. Have you forgotten that Treasury cut your budget by a whopping 306 percent?

Finally I want to remind you that the National Development Plan warns very specifically in chapter 6 against cutting up available marine resources in less viable pieces, which is exactly what SSFP is about.

You've held up hope to coastal communities that your plan will improve the quality of their lives. This may well be your last chance. If you fail them once again, you will cause untold misery, maybe even cause entire communities to implode. And you *will* be held accountable,

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**Annette Steyn: Minister Zokwana will leave a destructive legacy**

Honourable Chairperson,

The ANC's failure to empower millions of South Africans through its land reform processes has put this country at a cross roads. The announcements made by Minister Nkwinti have shocked the agricultural sector in a period where they are still negotiating in good faith with the Minister on best practises for win-win solutions on the land question.

Minister Nkwinti announced last Friday that the ceilings, for both natural and juristic persons will be as follows:

- The ceiling for a viable commercial small scale farm should be 1 000ha;
- The ceiling for a medium scale viable commercial farm should be 2 500ha; and
- The ceiling for a large scale viable commercial farm should be 5 000ha.

The DA is strongly opposed to any cap on agricultural land ownership as it will cap investment and cap job creation. Effectively, when farms grow beyond the ANC's proposed cap, government will expropriate them. This will preclude investment across the sector, including in black-owned agri-businesses that have grown beyond a certain point.

This, along with other proposals such as 50/50 ownership, has created uncertainty within the sector which could have a detrimental effect on food security, jobs and the economy as a whole.

Chairperson, it is becoming abundantly clear that the ANC government wants land reform to fail. If the ANC was serious about land reform, it would have ensured that a proper budget was made available for this very important program. It is of utmost importance that land reform succeeds in order to lift thousands of South Africans out of poverty.

So, why would the ANC government want land reform to fail? This would enable them at some point to evoke the limitation of rights under section 36 of the Constitution and override the protections guaranteed to individual property owners in terms of section 25 of the Constitution. This will allow the state to control all land, whether in the form of ownership or as a custodian.

This is becoming evident in the draft preservation and development of Agricultural Land Framework Bill in which it states in section 3 that, as the custodian of the nation's agricultural land, the Department may approve, reject, control, administer and manage any rezoning or subdivision of agricultural land. This bill further states that the Minister could expropriate land which has not been optimally used over a certain period of time at a lower price than would be paid for similar land in the same geographical area.

The SACP is clearly taking over from within – you still call yourselves the ANC but we are not fooled! We are witnessing a persistent trend towards an authoritarian approach in which the state controls and owns the land. This cannot be accepted in our young constitutional democracy.

One of the clearest indicators of this agenda to fail the land reform program is the cut in the budget of the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. Budget reductions over the medium term amount to:

- R158 million in 2015/16,
- R210 million in 2016/17 and
- R200 million in 2017/18.

These reductions are primarily the result of persistent underspending in previous years.

These budget cuts would have massive implications on the sector as a whole. Some of the most concerning reductions are as follows:

- The Agricultural Research Council will drop from R1,3 billion in 2014/15 to R1 billion in 2015/16.
- The Trade promotion and Market Access programme will be reduced from R298 253 000 in 2014/15 to R238 162 000 in 2015/16.
- The Cooperatives and Rural Enterprise Development sub-programme is going from R117 114 000 in 2015/16 to R68 240 000 in 2015/16.
- The Agro-processing and marketing sub-programme will also see its budget reduced, as will the Extension Support Services sub-programme.

All these budget cuts occur while the department aims to increase the number of hectares of land under productive use to 375 000 hectares by 2017/18 under its Fetsa Tlala project. This, however, is way below the target initially set by the department when it launched this project in 2013, where is set a target goal of 1 million hectares of land under production in the next 5 years.

The number of smallholder farmers supported per year will also be dramatically decreased from 7000 in 2014/15 to 3 900 in 2015/16.

The government is clearly failing people who live and work the land in communal areas.

The ANC government has left new emerging farmers to fend for themselves without proper title over the land, capital investment, skills, or access to markets. We need to support emerging farmers to enable them to run successful businesses. There needs to be substantial increases in support to emerging farmers as they move through the various stages of business development.

Chairperson, Minister Zokwana must stop telling farmers to calm down, that this is all a negotiating tactic. Why are you playing cat and mouse with the farmers? Next week we will probably see a new populist proposal being announced. Minister, do you not know the damage this is causing to this sector?

The Minister must inform us here today what his plans are. You are supposed to be the protector of food security and the agricultural sector at large yet you remain silent while steps are being taken to destroy it.

This will be your legacy! The time to act is now otherwise you will be the Minister who oversaw the enactment and implementation of legislation that systematically destroyed the agricultural sector, causing national food insecurity, major job losses and the collapse of rural economies. You cannot sit quiet while Minister Nkwinti runs amok.

South Africa deserves better.

A vibrant, inclusive rural economy can contribute to economic growth, food security, create jobs and help to alleviate poverty in South Africa. It speaks to the essence of the DA's vision of an Open Opportunity Society for all and will remain a key priority for all current and future DA governments.