**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES**

**TUESDAY, 9 MARCH 2021**

***PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES***

The Council met at 14:00.

The Deputy Chairperson took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayers or meditation.

The Deputy Chairperson announced that the virtual sitting constituted a sitting of the National Council of Provinces.

The DEPUTY CHAIPERSON OF THE NCOP: Let me start by welcoming the Chairperson, the Ministers, the permanent and special delegates.

**QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS ECONOMICS - CLUSTER 4A**

Question 3:

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL

DEVELOPMENT: Deputy Chairperson, Chairperson in the House,

members of the NCOP, hon Ntsube, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development introduced the Experiential Training, Internship and Professional Development Programme in 2003. The aim of the programme was to assist unemployed graduates with opportunities to acquire practical hands-on experience to get technical, professional, human resource and business-related skills, in order to enhance their chances of employability and enterprise development.

During their participation in the programme, they have to assign experienced mentors to systematically guide their development programme.

Since the inception of the programme, 3 654 young people benefitted from the programme under the following categories: on conventional internship, 2 477 graduates were placed in relevant functional units within the department; on industrial placement, 457 graduates were placed in various agribusinesses industry enterprises to gain business and entrepreneurial development skills – and here, I want to thank our agribusiness industry that has really been helpful in allowing these young people to spend time in their enterprises to learn practically what is being done – on the Agri-Export Technologies Programme, a total of 381 graduates were placed

with the Perishables Products Export Board, to gain valuable experience in the export industry; and on the Young Professionals Development Programme, a total of 339 were placed with the Agricultural Research Council and other research entities, to acquire research skills, and were further offered bursaries to pursue their Masters as well their PHD programme, while in this experiential learning.

In summary, of the 3 654 young people who participated, 769 secured employment in various sectors during their period of participation. The other 236 of those were employed in the department and I must say that we continue to assist those who have not yet secured employment to be able to do so. Thank you very much.

Mr I NTSUBE: Hon Deputy Chairperson, hon Minister, thank you very much for your elaborate response to the question. Some of the young people who have been in the programme have secured permanent employment in the programme. Does the department monitor those who have not been successful and are there means to assist them? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL

DEVELOPMENT: Deputy Chair, indeed, we do monitor those

learners who have been part of the programme, to see to what extent we can assist them further, to be able to secure employment. Others have actually chosen to be self-employed and therefore they are also assisted by the department. So, we do indeed monitor this programme and the candidates who have been part of it. Thank you.

The DEPUTY CHAIPERSON OF THE NCOP: Just before I continue, members, I have been informed that there was agreement on the order of how we are going to proceed on the follow-up questions.

Mr D R RYDER: Deputy Chairperson, Minister, thank you for your answer so far. This project is often criticised as being a means of funding ANC Youth League members. Can you tell us what are the qualifying criteria for applicants, how are successful applicants chosen and give us an indication of the average expenditure to date per successful applicant? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL

DEVELOPMENT: Hon Ryder, some of the details that you are asking about the budget, I might not be able to give to you now, but I will give that to you in writing. I must say that

this programme targets unemployed graduates. When a graduate actually applies to this programme, we don’t ask any member about their political affiliation, because that is not supposed to happen. As a South African government, we serve and we should serve all South Africans, regardless of their political participation. Our interest is to make sure that those young people who come out as graduates, without experiential learning and who are unemployed are given practical skills in the different categories that I have highlighted.

So, they do apply for our learning and training programme, they are then screened and then they are informed if they are successful or not, at a particular point in time. Thank you.

Mr T APLENI: Hon Deputy Chairperson, Minister, would you say that the Experiential Training, Internship and Professional Development Programme is an adequate long-term intervention for alleviating the unemployment of youth, women, and persons with disabilities? What percentage of participants go on to secure fulltime employment? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL

DEVELOPMENT: Let me answer hon Thembinkosi in this way that

the programme, on the one hand, is aimed at giving those young people who have graduated a hands-on experience in the industry in the sector in which they are working. So, some of them are actually in the department in the normal course of your interns. We place the others in the industry, some of them on farms, some of them in agribusiness enterprises, where we work with commodity organisations and participating farming communities who are willing to be part of this programme. So, they give these young people an actual practical experience in the workplace.

Something that we don’t commonly do is that ... Most of the young people who come from the university or college, actually go into employment and that is where a lot of them start to learn the ropes, while they are in the jobs. So, what we do

... This is kind of like a gap programme where these young people are prepared for the world of work.

A majority of them, not all, as I have indicated, have been employed in fulltime employment. So, it does assist us to prepare those young people for employability for the future.

It does not address the long-term employment challenge that we face, as a country, but it does intervene in resolving the

programme in one way or the other, by preparing and modelling those young people to be ready for the world of work. Thank you.

Mr S F DU TOIT: Deputy Chair, hon Minister, in the introduction notes of the 2011 the Experiential Training, Internship and Professional Development Programme policy guidelines, 10 years ago, it was stressed that there had already been a shortage of skilled professional and technical staff and it was a handicap to the agricultural development in South Africa. Minister, it is a fact that about 66 000 jobs were lost in the agricultural sector in the first quarter of 2020 and previous reports by Stats SA showed that agriculture employment had decreased by 8%. The agriculture employment regressed from 869 000 in the second quarter of 2016 to 799 000 in second quarter of 2020. Would you agree that the time is ripe to allow all the individuals, irrespective of their race, the opportunity to benefit from these internships, so as to ensure food security for South Africa and the rest of the continent? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL

DEVELOPMENT: Hon Du Toit, indeed the internship programme of government is actually not discriminating in terms of class,

race or gender. It is actually available for any young participant who wants to become part of the internship programme. So, the answer to you is yes. It is not yes because it is today, but it is yes because it is a policy programme that, in addressing the needs of our society, particularly, as you say, the skills in agriculture, we need to embrace every South African who want to go to this sector.

I must say that I was happy today, that regardless of the challenges that we have had, at least even in this quarter, with the GDP stats that were released, agriculture has still done much better. And I want to thank farmers and farm workers for the good work that they have done during the pandemic, to make sure that we have food security and contribute to the economy. Thank you.

Question 9:

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL

DEVELOPMENT: Deputy Chair, the question raised by hon Smit relates to the matters of registration of deeds. I must say that one of the things that we have been doing is to ensure that every registration of deeds that have come to our offices for registration is actually undertaken and it’s done. I must say that during the lockdown we have had certain challenges

because of the closure of our offices as a result of containing the infection. So we have had a backlog in that regard, which I must say, we have been able to address.

There has been an issue and I wouldn’t know because it has not been disclosed on the question, whether hon Smit relates to some of the challenges with regards to housing units that have been built not transferred in terms of the government housing programme because of the challenges of the deeds that are not yet out.

We are working with the Department of Human Settlement to see how best we can deal with those problems because part of the challenge is that some of those developments were actually done without any proper township establishment, which therefore impact on how we can address the issues of dealing with the deeds.

Secondly, the other matter of the deeds relates to the issue of restitution cases, where people’s claims have been resolved but it took time for their deeds to be registered and here it has actually been a challenge among government departments and with the Interministerial Committee on Agriculture, Land and Rural Development, we are now able to fast-track those

processes between the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, National Treasury and the department, in order to address that challenge of the deeds.

With regards to the third question, whether I consider property, such as the one in Mecklenburg B, Fetakgomo and Sekhukhune as prime examples of government land reform programme – I must say that the Mecklenburg doesn’t fit in the question directly in terms of what has been asked to us by hon Smit. Thank you very much, Deputy Chairperson.

Mr C F SMIT: Deputy Chairperson, I appreciate the opportunity. Hon Minister, will you today agree to the fact that properties, like this in tribal and communal areas that do not have a title deed and individual owner deny government the opportunity to collect much needed revenue for service delivery and creates a gab for tax evasion and money laundering, as well as hiding the profits from crime, like corruption? Will you commit to start the process of correcting this by ensuring that every South African has equal property rights that includes individual title to their residential and business property? And I am referring to the property behind me, as you can see there. Thank you.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL

DEVELOPMENT: Thank very much hon... is it Beyers who checking the follow up question?

The DEPUTY CHAIRPESON OF THE NCOP: Beyers Smit.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL

DEVELOPMENT: Thank you very much sir, for the question that you have asked. Indeed, it is our interest that every South African must have a secured tenure right on the land that he or she is in. I think is important for because the question you are raising hon Smith relates to the question of the tenure system that our country has. Yes, the has been many proponents, who are saying it is important for us to have a titling programme where every South African has a title to their land, individually or if they decide to have that as a group, they can have that collectively as a group. But you will know that in communal areas, this is the area where we still have got customary rights that are not codified in law, though they are accepted under trusteeship of the state, they are not yet...that’s one issue actually that we have not concluded.

I am confident that we will be able to deal that issue because already there’s has been issues that have been raised in terms of working on the policy and the Legislation. Working together with traditional communities and traditional areas on how best we need to deal with this issue in South Africa, where you have, you know, two tenure system, where have got free hold on one hand and you’ve got customary tenure one hand, which is not recognised by financial institution as a secure tenure system for instance. Thank very much.

Mr T B MATIBE: Deputy Chair, and I take this opportunity to thank the Minister for the elaborate answer on the person. Hon Minister, we need a reconfigured system of land tenure, which ensures that all South Africans, especially rural blacks, have reasonable access to land, with secure rights in order to fulfil their basic needs and productive livelihoods. My question as a follow up, is that is the department satisfied that all land reform beneficiaries have title deeds, evidencing ownership as per the Deeds Registries Act 47 of 1937. Thank you very much.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL

DEVELOPMENT: Deputy Chairperson, indeed I agree with hon Matibe on the reflections that he has made on the matters of

tenure reform. I want to say to hon Matibe that with regards to beneficiaries of land reform, particularly restitution, yes they do have their title on the land. The ones on redistribution similarly, yes they do, but when there was a change of the policy of long term lease, that’s where we are still experiencing a challenge. Not all of those who have been given allocation of state land have actually received their lease hold and it’s the matter that we are speeding up, because that 30-year lease hold does allow people to be able to develop their enterprises, particularly in the communities where they are. Thank you very much, hon member.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPESON OF THE NCOP: Thank you very much hon Minister. The next question will be asked by hon Ngwezi of the IFP, over to you, hon Ngwezi. You’ve got two minutes. Baba [Mr] Ngwezi, if you are not on the platform, we will have to continue and we will then now give to hon, is it Brenda Mathevula of the EFF, Brenda Mathevula.

Ms B T MATHEVULA: Ndza khensa xandla xa Mutshami-wa-xitulu [Thank you Deputy Chairperson], Minister, do you believe that a western colonial mind-set driven approach to land and property ownership such as titling of all land and property,

especial in rural areas will have a positive impact on poverty alleviation? Ndza khensa [ thank you.] Chair.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL

DEVELOPMENT: Thank you very much, hon member, I must say that this has actually been a question of debate not only in our country but also even is some countries such as Kenya, where they opted for a titling programme across the country. It has actually been bedevilled with a number of challenges, where once people are mortgaged and they actually utilised their pieces of the land as collateral, some of them when they are not able to pay, they then become landless. I think the beauty customary tenure system in some jurisdictions and I think looking at those jurisdictions and ourselves, has been that, even if you have lost your right to the property you have in the city under the municipal whatever, you can go home, emakhaya, kokwenu [ at your home] you got a piece of land.

The challenge that is emerging, which we must also address is how do you give the independence to traditional communities to be able to develop their land, their properties and at the same time collectively be able to share the collective rights as a community, that’s what in my view our tenure policy must address and look at what is a system that would allow for

economic use and development at the same time protecting the landlessness of our communities. Thank you very much.

Question 4:

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL

DEVELOPMENT: Hon Deputy Chairperson, the question that has been asked by hon Ngwenya relates to what the department is doing to improve the livelihoods and safety of farm workers. I must say that the department has been working with the Department of Safety and Security to really come up with a rural safety strategy that also includes mediation so that we are able to address the challenges that farm workers have with the land owners and their employers particularly where some of these disputes end up with eviction orders and render our farm workers landless. This is a matter that we are actually engaging our farmers as well as land owners on so that when we deal with issues of farm workers, we are actually sensitive that this is the cornerstone of development supporting the growth in the agricultural sector.

However, we have also decided to make sure that we intervene not only through legislation which is there – the Extension of Security of Tenure Act – but we also deal with support to farmer workers by supporting their children. The department

has adopted a total of 14 farm schools that host children of farm workers in six provinces - the Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal and Northern Cape. Since the inception of the programme, a total of 196 learners benefitted from the department’s farm school bursary programme.

Through this programme, learners are offered a comprehensive high school bursary from Grade 10 up until they complete their tertiary education. The bursary covers tuition if a learner is registered at a fee-paying school, textbooks and study guides, boarding fee if applicable, and uniforms. Of the 196 learners supported, 86 have actually enrolled for various programmes in agriculture at tertiary level and 36 of them have already completed their undergraduate studies in agriculture.

In terms of the safety of the farm workers - as I have indicated - we are working with the National Rural Safety Forum led by the Department of Safety and Security. We also want to indicate that communication platform with farm workers to communicate our initiatives, we do use Izimbizo, meetings and summits to ensure that we are concerned and also hearing what are the difficulties that farm workers experience and we are able to address those with the land owners, for instance. I know that this may not be enough, but these are some of the

interventions that we are engaged in as the department in improving the livelihoods and safety of farm workers. Thank you very much, hon Ngwenya.

*IsiZulu:*

Nk W NGWENYA: Ngiyabonga Sekela Sihlalo, ngiyabonga Ngqongqoshe ohloniphekile ngempendulo yalo mbuzo. Umbuzo ubuzwa ngenxa yenani elikhulayo lezingozi ezibandakanya abasebenzi basemapulazini, abathuthelwa emapulazini ngezimoto ezingekho emthethweni futhi ezingagculisi. Ngithanda ukubuza Ngqongqoshe ukuthi wenzani uMnyango ukunqanda ukusetshenziswa kwezimoto ngokungemthetho ezingakulungele ukuba semgwaqeni eziya emapulazini? Ngaphandle kokungabi semgwaqeni loku kuphinde kwehlise isithunzi sabasebenzi basemapulazini, kube sengathi bayizimpahla. Baminyaniswe ngemuva kwezithuthi zokuthutha izimpahla - amaloli.

Ngqongqoshe ngiyethemba uzovumelana nami ngithi kumele uMnyango wokuThutha ungenelele futhi wenze ubulungiswa ngalesi simo esibi abantu bakithi abasebenza ngaphansi kwaso.

IMinyango WezokuThutha noweZolimo kumele ibambisane ukuxazulula lesi simo. UMthethosisekelo waseNingizimu Afrika awuvumelani nokuthi abantu bakithi bahanjiswe ngezimoto ezingekho emthethweni. Ngiyabonga ngqongqoshe.

UNGQONGQOSHE WEZOLIMO, UKUBUYISWA KOMHLABA KANYE NOKUTHUTHUKISWA KWEZINDAWO ZASEMAKHAYA: Ngiyabonga kakhulu

kulungu elihloniphekile, umama uNgwenya ngalo mbuzo olandela umbuzo wakhe wokuqala. Impela kuloku okushoyo ngeke kube khona ukuthuthuka okuphelele, uma ngabe abalimi kumbe abasebenzi basemapulazini basaphatheke ngokuhlukunyezwa yilabo abangabaqashi babo.

Kubalulekile ukuthi uMnyango wami, uMnyango kaNgqongqoshe wezokuThutha kanye noMnyango wezeMisebenzi ihlalisane phansi, sixoxe futhi nabalimi ukuthi senzenjani ngezithuthi zabalimi ezihambisa abasebenzi zibe zingekho ezingeni elifaneleyo.

Akumnandi ukubona esike sakubona ukuqala kwe-lockdown, eWestern Cape lapho kutholakale ukuthi makugingqika iveni, baba baningi abalimalayo. Abanye baze balahlekelwa yizimpilo zabo.

*English:*

Indeed, it cannot be acceptable that farm workers are actually treated unfairly in such a way that the mode of transport that they are being subjected to use is not of standard, but also does not even respect our regulations as a country in terms of transportation of people or even goods. So, I agree with you

indeed, hon member, that this is a matter that the Departments of Labour, Transport and Agriculture must address working with the farm workers and the farmers in this instance.

I must say that I would like to thank the NGOs that have been very active in this area such as the Women on Farms Project – I can’t remember exactly the name of the organisation – but it is based in the Western Cape. And there is another gentleman, Mr Billy Claasen, who has been very active in actually bringing to our attention some of these gross injustices. I must also thank the members of the NCOP in their constituency work. They have also been able to raise some of these issue with the Minister and we have been able to address some of them. But I agree with you that we need a collective response that also takes into consideration the legal framework. Thank you very much.

Mr A B CLOETE: Hon Minister, thank you for answering these questions. My question is quite simple. I would like to know whether your department has purchased PPEs for especially farm workers and if so, I know that you won’t be able to give me the numbers right now. How were they distributed among farm workers?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL

DEVELOPMENT: Thank you very much, hon Cloete. Indeed, as we indicated in both the NCOP and the NA, part of the amount that was given to the department as the start of the lockdown to address the issues of food security as well as safety, we did procure PPEs for farm workers. We worked with farmers, farm workers themselves and the MECs in various provinces for the distribution of such PPEs to the farm workers. Thank you very much.

*Sesotho:*

Mong K MOTSAMAI: Ke a leboha Letona. Selemo le selemo re utlwa ditaba tse utlwisang bohloko ruri! Batho ba rona ba tshwerwe jwaloka makgoba. Ba patalwa ka jwala ba veine. Ha ba kula ha ba fuwe ditjhelete tsa boqheku mapolasing a maburu. Le etsa jwang ho thusa batho bao mathateng a jwalo?

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Minister, did you get the question?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL

DEVELOPMENT: Unfortunately, I was going to ask for the translation because I am not on my gadget here.

Ms B T MATHEVULA: Deputy Chairperson, did the Minister hear the question? I can repeat it if she didn’t.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: She didn’t hear the question. We’ll appreciate it if you can assist, hon Mathevula. Thank you.

Ms B T MATHEVULA: Minister, year after year we hear sad stories of farm workers and farm dwellers who are treated like slaves on South African farms. Many do not have entitlement to annual leave and paid sick leave. And many more are still paid with wine especially in the Western Cape. What long-lasting interventions do you think are needed to free farm workers and farm dwellers from the slavery they are subjected to by whites on the farms? Thank you, Deputy Chair.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Thank you, hon Mathevula. Hon Minister, I think it is clear now.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL

DEVELOPMENT: Thanks to the hon member for helping us with the translation. Indeed, one of the issues that - in my view – we need to address is the security of tenure of farm workers so that their working conditions as well as their tenure are not tied together, which always becomes a challenge. So, one of

the things we need to really address in terms of the Extension of Security of Tenure Act is to deal with the tenure security of farm workers so that they, like any other, go to employment like any worker who seeks employment. I think that would be one long-term intervention that – in my view – can deal with this challenge. But at the same time, we must be able to work with our farmers as well as other land owners who employ people who work on the land such as the farm workers to actually adhere to our Labour Relations Act. In this instance, we are actually engaged with the Minister of Labour to improve their inspections so that we are able to curb these without allowing this problem to just expand without being attended to. It is very critical that our inspection services don’t only end up in the big industries but also go to the farms because these are enterprises and work places for some in our society. Thank you very much.

Mr M R BARA: Thank you Minister for your response. But Minister, what alternative transport methods do you propose for farmers to use to ensure the safety of farm workers? And how will your department assist farmers to afford compliance in this regard as they are already under unreasonable financial pressure due to other failures by government to

assure their own safety and livelihoods as well as those of all their workers? Thank you, Deputy Chairperson.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL

DEVELOPMENT: Thanks hon Bara for the question. Really? I think all of us would agree that, if you employ any citizen and you actually want that citizen to contribute to the development of your enterprise as farm workers do, their treatment and working conditions should take into consideration what our Labour Relations provide for, for all of us including me, hon Bara. It cannot be that our farm workers, who actually contribute through their labour in ensuring that we attain food security and the growth in GDP, are treated in a manner that is unbecoming. You cannot use and unsafe and unworthy vehicle for carrying a human being. So, those cars or trucks cannot be. Certainly, you cannot overload those trucks to say, it is good because you have other pressures. All other industries like agriculture should actually plan, look at their cost, see what they need to do ameliorate the challenges that they face. Therefore, I would say the roadworthy transportation without it being overloaded in terms of our rules of transport, should be the appropriate vehicles that are ...

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon Minister, you are

muted. You were muted and so, we didn’t hear the last part.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL

DEVELOPMENT: Deputy Chairperson, I was actually saying it is incumbent upon farmers as well as other enterprises that are working on the land to provide for safer transport for the workers. Thank you very much.

Question 1:

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL

DEVELOPMENT: Thank you very much, hon Deputy Chair and the hon member who asked the question, hon Cloete. I want to say that yes, the department has developed mechanism to actually ensure that will limit any form of unfairness and any form of corruption that might be perceived, either the allocation as it’s indicated to political elites and government officials.

We have actually after 2019, through the Inter-Ministerial Committee, IMC, developed the national policy on beneficiary selection and allocation. This policy excludes the participation of serving political and government officials and further sets conditions that those serving in accordance to the forementioned categories will only be eligible for

participation in the land reform programme on completion of 12 months and 24 months cooling period respectively.

During the beneficiary selection and approval process, there is mandatory verification process to ascertain that applicants are not political office bearers or public servants in line with the provision of the national policy on beneficiary selection and land allocation policy. For instance, one of the things that we also do is to also check the nationality through running the applicants’ identity documents, IDs, through the Home Affairs systems so that we can pick up whether the people who have actually applied are South Africans first and foremost.

Secondly, we also run it through the programme of our Personal and Salary System, Persal, so that we can pick up that the person who has been applied is a serving official or a public office bearer. And that is how actually during the coronavirus disease, Covid, intervention we were able to remove a number of civil servants who had applied through the system because we are trying as best as we could to be rigorous and ensure that there is no unfairly, you know, allocation of land to those people who do not qualify in terms of our rules and regulations. Thank you very much.

Mr A B CLOETE: Thank you, Deputy Chairperson and thank you to the Minister for some measures that seem to have been put in place. However, I would like to bore this House for while where some research was done by the University of the Western Cape in collaboration with the Institute for Land, Poverty and Agrarian Studies. The report was called Elite Capture in Land Redistribution in South Africa. Out of the 62 farms it sampled only 18% of the farms were leased to farm workers, while 82% of the farms were leased to economically powerful and political connected individuals. In addition, there is a huge loophole for wrongdoing and corruption, political connected and economically powerful people have been able to leverage their social networks and access to land and resources ahead of the poor, state bureaucrats and the political powerful often capture resources in land reform through the soliciting of payments and bribes, so-called double-dipping, fronting the imposition of political connected beneficiaries and bailing out political connected people.

Also alarming is that state bureaucrats have in some cases withheld leases and threatened noncompliant beneficiaries with eviction. Minister, it is not me who says so, but it is the research that shows this and it is clear that ... [Inaudible.]

... on the Cloete’s farm is not an isolated incident. So, Minister who is it that should benefit from land reform and how will you ensure food security and job creation?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL

DEVELOPMENT: Thank you very much. I am, indeed, aware of the report that you are referring to on the sampling that was done on those 62 farms. Therefore, the issues that have been raised which actually in part is what necessitated government to be able to come up with a clearer policy that is understood by everybody on who benefits and how they benefit and how they’re allocated so that there is transparency in the process.

Clearly, you mentioned the issue of Irvin Cloete which I wouldn’t want to deal with in the detail, but it is a tip of an iceberg of the challenges that we are facing in land administration, but also on the behaviour of some of our civil service. Therefore, I don’t want to paint everybody with a brush, but there are those that we need to actually address, who are not worthy of being called public servants in their conduct, and what they have done in ensuring that our state is actually malady in the manner in which land reform has been undertaken. Because the purpose of land reform as we know clearly is about dealing with the legacy of our past, ensuring that we address the issue of land inequality in our society,

and be able to address the needs of those who had been historically disadvantaged in our country in terms of the land access. Thank you very much, Deputy Chair.

Mr M NHANHA: Thank you very much, Chairperson. Minister, in your response to hon Cloete you touched on Irvin Cloete of Darling and I will not be labour that point. However, also in your response to him you mentioned an importance to have a clearer policy direction as the department. Can I ask you, Minister, is it now your department’s clearer policy to kick long-term successful black farmers of the land and hand it over to an ANC political connected elite? If not, can you please publicly apologise today to Irvin Cloete, to Mr Vuyani Zigana from Kokstad as well as Mr John Mabasa whose family has been on the farm for generations since 1886 around Ermelo and all of these individuals. You don’t need to go to Home Affairs to verify whether they are South Africans or not, they are South Africans, Minister. These include many more other black farmers your department has mistreated.

Therefore, will you commit to handback their farms with all the necessary land tenure security to their land? Thank you very much.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL

DEVELOPMENT: Thank you very much, hon Chair and thank you to hon Nhanha. However, if he listened carefully the issue of Irvin Cloete was actually brought in by the originator of the question. He mentioned it and I also indicated that I will not be labour that point, but it does it reflects the challenges that are there in the department in terms of land administration which we are addressing and the policy I reflected on it. Therefore, I would invite hon Nhanha to go in our website to go down the national policy on beneficiary selection and allocation which clearly outlines how the state will allocate land and how the beneficiaries will access those land.

In my view the issues that hon Nhanha is raising are issues that we have to and we are addressing. On the matter of Zigana, I gave a report on what happened in that matter, we are addressing it. Similarly, with the Cloete matter I’ve just received a report on what has happened and we are having remedial action on what should be done. Both two, Mr Cloete to the other company that was allocated similarly dealing with consequence management on those officials who have been found wanting not just on the Mr Cloete thing, but on number of areas where there are irregularities that have been found. And

that is why I said that there are those within our governance system who actually have done injustice in the way in which public services are projected and are actually received by our citizens. Thank you very much, hon member.

Mr A J NYAMBI: Thank you, Chairperson. Let me first start by commending Minister for the detail response. In agreeing with you, Minister, that the issue of land it’s a very emotive one, and is an issue that will always raise emotions when dealing with it. As somebody that has been a Member of Parliament and a backbencher in the past that has got a sense of expectations, what would be your advice and expectations given the challenges when it comes to issues of land transformation, when it comes to Members of Parliament instead of just being bystander and criticising not providing concrete solution in terms of these very serious emotive issues to the nation and Africa in general. I hope you will assist us so that we can be making that meaningful contribution. Thank you, otherwise my latter part of my question was covered by your earlier response. However, I want an honest advice given the current challenges, hon Minister. Thank you, Chair.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL

DEVELOPMENT: Thank you very much, Chairperson. As public

representative, our role is to represent the concerns interests of our citizens which we do in a number of ways by bringing up issues from our various constituencies to the members of the executive, but also to the House for their deliberation. We do so also through the petitions that we bring, but we also do so in terms of the oversight that we undertake as Members of the Parliament which enables yourselves to measure to what extend our policies and our legislation actually land to those who they are supposed to serve.

I must say that I found very interesting co-operation with members of the NCOP as well as the National Assembly. Some of them being members of the committee of the portfolio committee I have to report to, but some of them not. Who will bring up issues to ask that my constituency, these are the concerns I picked up and these are the challenges that Minister you must follow up. Some of the issues that we have been able to investigate have been brought to our attention by Members of Parliament. Therefore, I would actually say that we need to continue to do so because as public representatives, all of us even though one may be in the executive, our first and foremost allegiance should be our Constitution and our citizens. Thank you very much.

Mr M S MOLETSANE: Thank you, Chairperson. Hon Minister, we know for a fact that most plaas farms have been handed over to former uMkhonto weSizwe, MK, soldiers. Many of whom have zero farming skills while many small-scale farmers have been thrown from pillar to post by the department. Does your department actually perform a skills audit before handing over productive farms to prospective farmers? And what capacity building interventions do you make while those who are given the land do not possess sufficient skills to farm? Thank you, Chairperson.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL

DEVELOPMENT: Thank you very much, hon Chairperson and hon member. Well, with regard to the preface to the question by the hon member that he knows for a fact, unfortunately, I don’t in terms of the category of persons that he says that have been the preferred ones to get the farms as oppose to small-scale farmers. I want to say that, indeed, I may not speak of how in the past the department might have been dealing with those issues. However, you will recall that when the President announced last year in the state of the nation address, he indicated government’s commitments that when we allocate the farm to an individual, we would do the

verification of the capacity and be able to subject to all of those towards trading so that we handhold those members to be able to know what they have to do.

We do have a category of people in our country. We have been operating at a small-scale other in communal areas who actually do have the experience, but they need to expand in order to be economically and commercial viable. Therefore, in terms of the training that would actually differ depending on the farmer concern. For instance, a farmer who has been doing livestock in the village knows very well what he or she needs to do in terms of animal health, but may need to be assisted on the trade matters beyond the local community how he or she must understand the national as well as regional and export market. So, that may be the kind of training.

However, a person who has the passion, who has never farmed before, that is the person we actually need to look at. What is the size of the land you can actually give to this individual, how do you train that individual in order for him or her to grow? And that would relate also to young people because a number of young people who may be coming from university may not actually have any knowledge about farming, but they may have the love and the passion of the sector.

Therefore, it is important to be able to balance and not actually say because you know nothing about farming we are not going to attend to you. Our responsibility is how do we help you to get the technical knowhow that will be relevant for the enterprise you want to get into in terms of agriculture. Thank you very much.

Question 11:

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL

DEVELOPMENT: Thank you very much, hon Chairperson and thanks to hon Smit for the question, I just want to say to hon Smit that government has done something about the concerns that you are raising in your question, for instance, an evaluation of all the grants that we had been given by government starting in 1994 going forward had been done because what government was trying to do was to look at what forms of support we have been given, have they worked and have they had challenges; and that’s what resulted into a policy change.

The land redistribution for agricultural development grant evaluation again resulted into policy change. Similarly, the cost settlement and support that was given was also assessed. An evaluation study was done by the Department of Monitoring and Evaluation on comprehensive agricultural support

programme, recapitalisation and development programme to assess how these have assisted or not assisted farmers, and therefore, what needed to be done.

I therefore want to say that, yes, there has been challenges but also there have been successes in the various programmes that have been undertaken with regards to land reform. I must say that today I read in one of the newspaper articles where one of the restitution cases in Bela-Bela, on earth production, working with their mentors have been one of the success stories. I can also speak about Ngomane in the Mpumalanga area. So, we do have success stories and depressing stories with regard to land reform that we need to address.

Thank you very much.

Mr C F B SMIT: Thank you very much, hon Chairperson and thanks hon Minister, I am glad that you have started looking into the matter. However, I think it is also necessary to acknowledge that there is unfortunately more failure than there is success.

Hon Minister, I would also like to know if you will commit today to immediately institute a comprehensive productivity

audit of all farms that fall within this category and advice when will this happen?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL

DEVELOPMENT: Hon Smit, as much as I would love to do so, I don’t want to put myself into a trap where I speak of the hoof and make a commitment that I cannot meet. What I can say is that the productivity audit which you are referring to, is important because it would enable us to plan, to cost appropriately and have a clear project pipeline of what needs to be done at a particular point in time. I would agree with you on that one but to commit timelines, no, I won’t do. Thank you very much.

Mr S ZANDAMELA: Thanks Chairperson, Minister, have you done a comprehensive cost settlement needs assessment for all the land reform projects? If so, what are the basic requirements needed for these projects to prosper and what are you doing to ensure that all the support needed is provided? Thanks Chairperson.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL

DEVELOPMENT: Thank you very much, hon Chairperson and thanks to the hon member, the analysis that has been done has not

been conclusive with regard to all the past projects that were undertaken with regard to land reform. With respect to the state land allocation that was announced by the President, we have done that analysis in all these farms. I must say that it is one of the things that I can say, basic for any farmer and any farm to be of success, they do need on farm and off farm infrastructure, for instance, they do need to fence their farm, windbreakers or fire breakers wherever they are, an understanding of what is the water capacity in that farm so that if the farmer chooses to go on crop farming, he can see whether it is irrigable and how much is the quantity of water that is there, they also need to have a place to keep their animals if they are in animal farming and do need to have a house; otherwise, where will they stay if the farmer is not in the proximity of the farm, a property is needed there.

So, I can say that the basic farm infrastructure that is required for any commodity is key to be able to have those farms successful. Thank you very much, hon member.

Once we done some of that work, I must say that we will come back and have that engagement with the portfolio committee in the NCOP. Thank you very much.

Mr A B CLOETE: Thank you very much, hon Chairperson and thank you Minister, this is an important question because land reform debate and who owes what is being referred as a one- sided approach, where some are to be regarded as the aggressors and the rest is the oppressed, but in reality it is not. Let me give you an example, in the Free State, the Matjhabeng municipality owes Eskom a lot of money. As part of the payment agreement with Eskom, the municipality offered 139 farms as security. So, we have a municipality that can offer

139 farms as security to Eskom. That possibly makes them an organ of state that is the biggest landowner in their district, also, not many commercial farmers have that security to give.

My question is: What is the municipality doing with 139 farms, while those farms could be made available for food security and is it a good idea for municipalities to own so much land?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL

DEVELOPMENT: Hmm, Cloete, I think I need to visit Matjhabeng, I must be honest that ... [Interjection.]

Mr A B CLOETE: You should.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL

DEVELOPMENT: ... I was like, wow. I hope those are not part of the farms of the beneficiaries of land reform that have been used as collateral for such. I must undertake that one will engage with the municipality so that we further understand the issue that you have raised. I cannot be able to answer you in much more convincing way because I would also need to do my own research. Thank you.

*IsiZulu*:

Nk L C BEBEE: Ngiyabonga kakhulu Sihlalo ngokunginikeza leli thuba. Ngibonge nakuMhlonishwa woMnyango nezimpendulo. Cha, uphendule kahle. Engifuna ukuqala ngakho ukusho ukuthi akulona iqiniso, futhi kungamampunge ukuthi uhulumeni akenzanga lutho. Ngisho kunina ke ontabakayikhonjwa ngoba kusukela ngowe-1994 kube noshintsho olukhulu kuMthethomgomo ukuhlonza izinkinga.

Ngakho ke bengicela ukubuza Mhlonishwa ukuba ngabe uhulumeni unazo yini izinhlelo zokungenelela ekubuyisweni komhlaba na? Nokuthi yibuphi ubunzima ahlangabezana nabo? Ngiyazi uthe ukukuthinta kancane kodwa bengifuna ukuthi ungene kakhulu ukuze bezwe kahle ukuthi uthini. Ngiyabonga Sihlalo.

UNGQONGQOSHE WEZOLIMO, UKUBUYISWA KOMHLABA KANYE NOKUTHUTHUKISWA KWEZINDAWO ZASEMAKHAYA: Ngiyabonga kakhulu

Sihlalo, ngibonge futhi nakulungu elihloniphekile ngombuzo nangezincomo azishoyo. Yebo, kusukela onyakeni wezi-1994 ukuya ngaphambili kuningi kona esikwenzile. Mangisho nje futhi ukuthi indaba yomhlaba, yindaba enzima ngoba izama ukuthi isikhumbuze la sivela khona. Okungelona imuva elimnandi kakhulu ngoba sasihlukumezekile. Yingakho kufanelekile ukuthi lolu daba siluphathe kahle okwezikhali zamantungwa.

Singeke sikuphike ukuthi uma kusekhona kuleli likamthaniya abadla izambane likapondwe, abanemihlaba eyindathane kukhona igcuntswana elingena lutho. Isimo sezombusazwe asihlaliseki kahle. Yingakho lolu hlelo lokuhlengahlengisa kwendaba yomhlaba lubalulekile kakhulu. Kodwa ke futhi sekwaba yichilo uma ngabe sekukhona ezinye izinto esizithola ukuthi ziyenzeka ukuthi le mihlaba ingaphatheki kahle, iphatheke budedengu.

Uthole ukuthi namalungu oMnyango wethu amanye ayathinteka ngokungaziphathi kahle, ngokuthi bese behlukumeza labo bantu okuyibona okungabe siyabasiza.

Mangisho lungu elihloniphekile ukuthi yize kunjalo akulahlwa mbeleko ngakufelwa, kufanele siqhubeke nje kulomshekashika ukuze ukuthi nje ngelinye ilanga sisonke kuleli lengabadi yaseNingizimu Afrika singaba ngabaninimhlaba futhi ubuzwe

bethu sibuzwe ukuthi cha, bubuyile ngoba nami sengikhomba ngophakathi. Ngiyabonga.

Question 5:

*IsiZulu*:

UNGQONGQOSHE WEZOLIMO, UKUBUYISWA KOMHLABA KANYE NOKUTHUTHUKISWA KWEZINDAWO ZASEMAKHAYA: Ngiyabonga kakhulu

Mphathi Sihlalo, ngibonge nakulungu elihloniphekile umama uModise mayelana nalombuzo awubuzile. Ngithanda nje ngingakawuphenduli ngendlalele ukuthi sithokoze kakhulu siwuMnyango ukuthi uMongameli uma ebheka sikumisa kanjani ikakhulukazi kule simo esiphuma kuso la futhi sisekuso namanje le simo sokuhlukunyezwa u-COVID-19. Sikwazi ukuthi abasebenzi kumbe abalimi abasafufusa esibabiza phecelezi subsistence farmers sikwazi ukuthi basizakale. Bathole isinsiza zikahulumeni bagcine le misebenzi abakuyo ngoba phela bawumkhakha obalulekile wokuletha ukuthi kungabikhona ukulala kwekati eziko.

Yebo ke kokumemezela ngo-Okthoba imali ize yafika kithi ngoDisemba. Sesiqalile vele kulo leli viki. Abanye abahlomulile sebezowathola amavawucha abo.

*English*:

Thank you very much hon Chair and hon members, thank you hon Modise for your question. I must say that, this initiative by the President on the employment stimulus is very important particularly when you look at subsistence farmers, because although they may not be working for somebody, but working for themselves, it is about job retention for those subsistence farmers. For the first time, government has realised their importance in terms of household food security, and the target that the President announced, was to support about 74 656 subsistence farmers.

We have undertaken the process of ensuring that we call for application for this category of farmers, targeting women, those people with disabilities, child-headed households, farm dwellers, farm workers and military veterans for the support. Chair, I must say that we have been encouraged about the responses that we have received, particularly that we used the Unstructured Supplementary Service Data, USSD platform which uses a small cellphone even ...

*IsiZulu*:

... le encane nje unomathotholo ...

*English*:

... which actually shows the penetration of technology in our society, which can be used for the advantage in order to support farmers. We will be starting this week to issue the vouchers to those who have been successful. Thank you very much.

Ms T C MODISE: Thank you very much hon Chair, good afternoon hon members and hon Minister. Thank you very much hon Minister for your response. Let me appreciate the President of the country in initiating this stimulus package programme. Indeed, our government led by the ANC is taking care of the poorest of the poor. Hon Minister my follow-up question is: Looking at the preparatory work that has already been done by the department. Id the department satisfied that the programme will reach all the targeted group? Thank you very much hon Chair.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL

DEVELOPMENT: Thank you very much hon Chair and hon Modise for your follow-up question. Indeed, we are confident that we will be able to the reach the targeted groups that we have identified in terms of this support. Thank you very much.

*Setswana:*

Moh S B LEHIHI: Modulasetilo, tshwaelo yame mo go Mokhuduthamaga ke gore, balemirui le balemi ba bantsi ga ba ungwelwe go tswa go Letlole la Ketleetso ka Moporesidente ka ntlha ya go tlhoka kitso. Ke eng lefapha le sa dire dikopano mo metseng le mo metsesetoropong go itsisi balemirui ka seno?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL

DEVELOPMENT: I will ask for some assistance.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon Lehihi! Why don’t we get hon

Lehihi, just to repeat the question again?

*Xitsonga:*

Manana B T MATHVULA: Mutshamaxitulu, a ku vi muhundzuluxeri loyi a hundzuluxelaka. NCOP yi na vahundzuluxeri lava hundzuluxelaka loko Holobye a nga ri twisisi ririmi leri ku vutisiwaka hi rona ematshan’weni ya ku vuyelerisa xivutiso.

The CHAIRPESON OF THE NCOP: We will sort out the problem and apologise for the inconvenience. Can hon Lehihi just please repeat the question.

*Setswana:*

Ms S B LEHIHI: Balemirui le balemi ga ba ungwelwe go tswa go Letlole la Ketleetso ka Moporesidente ka ntlha ya go tlhoka kitso. Ke eng lefapha lo sa dire dikopano mo metseng le mo metsesetoropong go itsisi balemirui ka seno? Ke a leboga, Modulasetilo.

The CHAIRPESON OF THE NCOP: It does seem that there were some problems that was experienced by the farmers. Is it not possible to get an intervention where these farmers are visited locally and kept informed and addressed about developments?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL

DEVELOPMENT: Thank you very much hon Chair, thank you for translating for me and thank you to the hon member for the question. I must say that, all the people who have applied,

76 442 of those applicants were actually visited by our extension officers, because we wanted to prove that those people are indeed working there, we see their production and actually ...[Interjections]

Ms B T MATHEVULA: Chairperson! Chairperson!

The CHAIRPESON OF THE NCOP: Mathevula, on what point are you rising?

Ms B T MATHEVULA: On a point of order Chair.

The CHAIRPESON OF THE NCOP: What is your point of order?

Ms B T MATHEVULA: I think you have translated the question very wrongly. Can I assist you in translating it?

The CHAIRPESON OF THE NCOP: You should have done that the first time we tried. Nonetheless, let’s hear you.

Ms B T MATHEVULA: Thank you very much Chair. The question was saying: What are some of the ways in which the department has ensured that, small scale farmers are have access of information to the Presidential Economic Stimulus Package.

Thank you Chair.

The CHAIRPESON OF THE NCOP: I am sure that Minister would have got what was said in English in any way by hon Lehihi. Please proceed Minister.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL

DEVELOPMENT: Thank you very much hon Lehihi for your question

and thank you Brenda for your translation. Indeed, we make public the information on the Presidential Employment Stimulus Initiative. Firstly, we announced on all radio stations, community radio stations. We also did on electronic media which is your television and print media. But also, we worked with our extension officers to be able to share the information with those who would be applicants, if I may say so.

When the programme was launched, a number of farmers did respond by applying. Further, we had a verification process where we visited each and every applicant who had lodged their application, to be able to know that, yes indeed this individual applied, he or she has about one or two goats for farming on the size of a hectare. We did that. What we are doing now is the verification of those applicants in terms of them meeting the criteria for programme. Thank you very much hon Chair.

Mr W A S AUCAMP: Thank you hon Chair and hon Minister. Hon Minister, our farmers are currently finding themselves in very difficult financial situations. This is due to various reasons such as rising operational costs, as well as costs due to COVID-19. Almost on a daily basis we hear of the attacks on

the people on our farms and therefore, farmers have also an additional burden of ensuring their workers and their safety on the farms.

Another factor putting financial pressure on our farmers, is the insecurity of the land due to possible changes to the security of ownership in section 25 of the Constitution. It is thus clear hon Minister that there are various factors putting our farmers in extreme financial difficulty, and that those will have a negative impact on employment in the agricultural sector.

Therefore, my questions hon Minister is: What plans are in place to financially assist our struggling farmers in these difficult times, and what budgets are available to do so?

Thank you very much hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL

DEVELOPMENT: Hon Chair, hon Aucamp knows as well as I do that, the question he is asking doesn’t arise from the original question. However, I will respond. I could have taken an easy way and say, this question doesn’t arise because indeed, it doesn’t. Hon Aucamp I agree that there are difficulties that the agricultural sector like any industry, is experiencing.

One of the thing that we experienced as the agricultural sector has actually been the challenge in the cost of agricultural finance. Also the challenge that befell the Land Bank last year was also a shocker to the system.

I must be honest, we are grateful that Cabinet and the Minister of Finance in particular, has actually been able to hear the cries of the farmers and ensuring that, we do not leave the Land Bank to collapse. Albeit the need for us to strengthen and transform the bank so that it does the work that it is supposed to.

We have also worked with other financial institutions on a blended finance scheme, where we will as the government with the participating bank share the risk in terms of grant and loan, to be able to support farmers. We will be relaunching that blended finance very soon, because it is important to appreciate that, there are challenges in our sectors of the economy, particularly even before and during COVID-19, which we must continue to address.

The intervention that the President has pulled on how we can recover the economy and build better as we go living on this pandemic, is actually appreciated. I am sure that these

interventions that I have just raised will assist the farmers in one way or the other. Thank you very much hon Chair.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Thank you very much hon Minister. Let’s just double-check if we have hon Ngwezi from the IFP. Hon Ngwezi! Thank you very much, we will then proceed to the next question. Before we do that, let us just thank the Minister and express an appreciation for her presence, attendance and contribution in answering our questions. Thank you very much Minister.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Let us just check again if we have hon Ngwezi from the IFP. Hon Ngwezi? Thank you very much, we will then proceed to the next question. Before we do that let us thank the Minister and express an appreciation for her presence and contribution in answering the questions. Thank you very much, Minister.

We proceed to Question 6. Before we deal with the question itself and indicate what the question entails, let us extend to the Council an apology from the Minister, she is having a minor operation but will be able to respond to the question virtually.

Question 6:

The MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT:

Chairperson of the NCOP, the Constitution of our country allocates the duty to undertake compliance and enforcement of environmental legislation to all three spheres of government, and the National Environment Management Act of 1998 provides for the delegation of environmental management inspectors who are officials from national, provincial and local environment and conservation agency authorities. These officials are accorded a wide range of legislative powers which enable them to execute their constitutional mandate.

Our department is there for only one of several regulatory authorities that have environmental management inspectors under our ranks. As of March 2020 there were a total of 3 661 EMIs designated across the country with 3 240 being employed by national and provincial spheres of government and 421 being employed by local authorities. Of these 3 240, 71% or 2 332 are field rangers who operate exclusively within the boundaries of the country’s protected area network.

In my view, we do need additional enforcement officers and inspectors, but at this stage, hon Chairperson, budget cuts make further enlargement of this force difficult. Due to

limited capacity available, the inspectorate has focused on optimising its collaborative partnerships with other government departments and law enforcement agencies to leverage on the mutual benefits of adopting what we call a whole of government approach.

In this respect, we work very closely with officials from other national departments, including Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation, Minerals and Energy as well as having formal memorandums of understanding or standard operating procedures with law enforcement agencies such as the South African Police Service, the National Prosecuting Authority, NPA, and the South African Revenue Services.

This collaborative approach is aimed at allowing each regulatory authority to execute its own mandate and at the same time providing mutual support so that we can leverage on common resources in circumstances where these mandates are interrelated.

Other initiatives that seek to expand the capacity of the inspectorate is that of environmental and diversity monitors appointed under the Extended Public Works programme. In addition, a fourth coming amendment to National Environmental

Management Laws Amendment Act, NEMA, will empower provincial MECs to designate officials from their departments as environmental management inspectorates to undertake compliance and enforcement work. Thank you very much, hon Chairperson.

Mr T B MATIBE: Hon Chairperson, I would like to thank the Minister for the very elaborate response to the question that I asked. During the pandemic it has been noted that there was an increase in certain types of environmental offences in different provinces and different areas. Notwithstanding the budget constraints, a lot has been done to monitor the compliance. The question that I want to ask as a follow-up is: Is the collaborative effort that you spoke about being able to assist to cover the gaps that are there because of not having enough inspectors? Thank you very much, Chair and hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT: I

think one of the outcomes that we use to measure whether our partnerships are working is the rate of prosecutions and convictions in criminal trials. I can report to you that in the 2019-20 financial year the NPA reported a total of 883 criminal crimes involving environmental offences of which 857 resulted in convictions and 26 acquittals. So, this translates into a 97% conviction rate.

I think that, hon Matibe, you would also have noted that we have had a number of high profile cases where goods such as rhino horns were seized by the Hawks, customs officials and other officials. The biggest recent bust in that regard was in December 2020 where we saw 17 rhino horns weighing approximately 72kg from a warehouse in Kempton Park.

So, I think it is these kinds of positive outcomes that lead us to believe that in constraint situations we must enhance and depend on these partnerships. Thank you very much.

Ms H S BOSHOFF: Hon Chair, Good afternoon to the hon Minister. Minister, you have just said that you are in need of human capacity. Are you then willing to acknowledge that your department’s resources are not being utilised effectively especially when it comes to holding Eskom responsible for the pollution caused by their coal fire power stations that are detrimentally impacting on people’s health as showcased by the Deadly Air or Umoya Obulalayo case? Thank you very much, Minister and Chair.

The MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT: On

the contrary, I think that my department has done very well

when it comes to implementing both inspections and taking action against Eskom. You would know that we recently had a situation where there were shutdowns of certain power utilities in that area in order to ensure that they complied with maintenance requirements, and we also a have criminal case in this regard taking place at the moment. I don’t have the details with me but if you are interested in that Deadly Air case you would, of course, have read my founding or replying affidavit and there is an extensive list in there of all the measures we have taken to deal with transgressions with regard to air quality. Thank you very much.

Mr S F DU TOIT: Hon Chair, to the hon Minister, South Africa is a water scarce country and water pollution is a great concern. The Vaal River system is under a lot of pressure.

With reference to the Kareerand Tailings Storage Facility that will add 380 hectares of the Tailings Storage Facility, TSF, footprint and will approximately be 122 meters high on completion. This is near the Khuma Stilfontein in Matlosana municipal area in the North West province. It was stipulated in the Kareerand Tailings report that a populated runoff will enter the Vaal River system a few kilometres above the extraction point of Midvaal Water Company that provides drinking water to the Klerksdorp, Orkney, Stilfontein and

Hartbeesfontein areas. It also stipulates that underground water will be polluted — boreholes that are the only source of fresh drinking water for the residence of this area. My question is: Does your department have sufficient human resource capacity to tend to the issues raised in the report, and maybe did their own investigation on this matter?

The MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT: Hon

Chairperson, I think that is a new question and not a question arising. I think that it is a substantial question and I would want to suggest that I would be very willing to respond to the hon member if he could submit it as a question for written reply because I would need to look into the background of the case, who is the responsible authority and so on. But I am very happy to answer it if he were to submit it to me. Thank you.

Ms B T MATHEVULA: Chairperson, to the Minister, what are some of the ways in which the department has strengthen its accountability mechanism to curb noncompliance with the existing environmental policies and legislation? Thank you, Chair.

The MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT: I

think that it is a very important question and I think first of all there is the issue of the role of the inspectorate. So, when there are complaints about breaches of environmental legislation we send out inspectors to investigate those complaints and to make reports to us.

Once the matter has been investigated, if we find that in fact a transgression has taken place, we would then have to issue a notice so that the relevant offending institution would first be able to account for what has happened, and secondly, would be able to inform us what they are doing to rectify the situation.

Of course if they can neither account nor take remedial action, we then have the option to fine them in terms of the existing environmental legislation or we have the option to open criminal proceedings. I think that depending on the gravity of the situation we would then decide what would be the appropriate response. Thank you very much.

Question 13:

The MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT: Thank

you very much hon Chairperson. In May 2020, following public concern about shark populations along the South African coast,

an expert panel was established to formally review South Africa’s national plan of action for the conservation and management of sharks. The panel scrutinised 60 documents over three months and held eight virtual meetings. The panel’s report was endorsed by myself, and presented and released to the public in November 2020. The panel provided five overarching recommendations for immediate implementation. The full draft action table which encompasses all of these recommendations and their subactions will be implemented in full in the 2021- 22 financial year. To date we have taken some important steps:

Firstly, since November 2020 we have introduced best practice in the handling of sharks for release. This would be sharks that are caught as by-catch, and this best practice has been included in the permit conditions for the line fish, pelagic, longline and demersal fisheries;

Secondly, we have set up a pilot electronic observer programme with the installation of a camera. This is the first pilot programme with the installation of a camera on a commercial vessel;

Thirdly, we have developed 3-D printed synthetic fins to assist with the identification of vulnerable shark species in order that we can commence with widespread training within the industry as part of implementing the shark plan;

Fourthly, there is internal co-ordination and assignment of responsibilities between the branch Oceans and Coasts and the Fisheries Department; and

Lastly, we have already implemented a slot limit in the line fishery permit conditions and this slot limit ensures that only sharks of a particular dimension can be caught. This prevents overfishing of juveniles that would not yet have reached maturity and reproductive age.

With regard to the roles of provincial and local government, these will be clarified in the consultation process which

forms part of the revision of this plan and we already have the report ready to be presented to the Ministers and Members

of Executive Councils, Minmac, and Ministerial Technical Committee, Mintec. These would be the bodies where provincial and local governments are represented and these bodies have working committees. So that process has already begun. You would understand that overall, fisheries and oceans management

is a national function but where we can co-ordinate, for example with the Sharks Board in KwaZulu-Natal, this is what the consultation would be about.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Thanks Minister. We’ll move on to hon Labuschagne for a follow up question. Hon Labuschagne? It doesn’t seem as if hon Labuschagne is there. That being the case, we will move on to other follow up questions, starting with hon Arnolds.

Ms C LABUSCHAGNE: Chairperson?

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Let’s start with Labuschagne and

then Arnolds. Labuschagne?

Ms C LABUSCHAGNE: I’m so sorry Chair. I had a little bit of a problem. Thank you very much Minister. As you said, you endorsed these recommendations in a speech that you made in November 2020. Thank you for the detailed response that you gave.

I just want to ask, specifically with regard to the findings

... that was, according to this report, for immediate implementation. I want to focus on recommendation four. They gave five recommendations that they thought should be

implemented immediately. I want to focus on recommendation four that says, stronger focus on illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing and improved monitoring of surveillance and enforcement of compliance.

Now, I want to know whether the department has the resources to execute this recommendation, especially with the reducing role of the Defence ... the department can play in light of their extreme budget cuts, or did you prioritise this issue in the medium-term budget?

The MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT: Thank

you very much hon Labuschagne. I think this issue of dealing with unregulated and illegal fishing is one of the major concerns that one would have with regard to fisheries in general. It’s not confined to the fishing of sharks. I think one would really feel very strongly that this is a major threat to the sustainability of our oceans and the sustainability of our food stocks.

We have something called Operation Phakisa Initiative 5 which has particularly focused on preventing illegal fishing of West Coast rock lobster and abalone. I think that we have developed a very sophisticated system whereby we can track vessels entering our waters illegally. However, the major concern at

this stage would be vessels that would be coming from the shore and would be entering into illegal activities.

So it is our intention, as we review this whole process and as we tighten up on the whole management of the shark plan, to include this area because I think that we are very mindful of the fact that first of all we have a legal industry here, and secondly that we also have a tourism-related industry where people are doing shark cage diving. We would want to ensure that the stocks are sustainable to allow both of those industries to survive and we want to make sure that neither of the competitors in the illegal space can chase them out of business.

However, I think that what is more important is to deal with the by-catch issue in legal fisheries because I think this is where we are finding the most serious challenge. That is why we have started looking at the issue of the slot numbers, at the issue of the identification and also at the protocol for release, so that where these creatures are caught by accident as by-catch, as many of them as possible should be put back. Thank you very much.

We can’t hear you, hon Chair.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: ... that. Hon Arnolds?

Mr A ARNOLDS: Thank you Chairperson and greetings to the Minister. The panel of experts expressed concerns regarding the management and protection of sharks, including widespread reports of illegal, unreported and unregulated shark fishing that poses long-term risks to biodiversity, species survival and then also to the sustainability of law-abiding fishers.

Minister, my question is the following. Do we have the human and financial resources to protect our endangered species? If not, how can stakeholders assist government in this regard?

The MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT: Thank

you very much hon Arnolds. I think that I partially answered your question in the response to hon Labuschagne in the sense that we do need to look at our Operation Phakisa 5 programmes and how these can be extended to protecting our shark species.

However, we also need to understand that the biggest threat to these species is actually happening through the incidental by- catch and I think you would’ve seen that already in the initial measures that we have introduced we are already trying to deal with this matter. It’s very important that vessels

that are not intending to catch shark ... the crew on those vessels need to be educated as to the different shark species. This is why we have been developing all these plastic models so that we can start with training. It’s also important that they follow certain protocols in putting these species back into the water so that when they are caught by accident that they don’t damage them in such a way that they shouldn’t survive.

So these are the matters that we are giving attention to and, as I said to hon Labuschagne, I think that we remain concerned that, generally, illegal fishing is posing the biggest threat to our fish stocks. This is where we have been having good outcomes with Operation Phakisa 5 in collaboration with the SA Police Service. I think that we would want to continue with those partnerships in relation to other species.

Mr I NTSUBE: Thank you very much hon Chairperson. I’ve got a short question here for the Minister. Does the department have any mechanism to monitor the implementation of the recommendations by the panel of experts?

The MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT: Hon

Ntsube, I think what’s really important here is that we are

working on mainstreaming these recommendations into the annual performance plan, APP, of the department as a whole and into the Oceans and Coasts branch and the Fisheries branch. I think it is then incumbent on management to ensure that these recommendations are implemented.

However, of course it also gives an opportunity when these APPs are placed before members of the NCOP and the National Assembly on a quarterly basis, that you can also have oversight on the implementation of the recommendations. I think with that collective responsibility we should get better outcomes.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Thank you very much. Hon Ngwezi of the IFP? It doesn’t seem as if hon Ngwezi is there, so we will move on to Question 7 which is on the effects of COVID-19 on the job creation programme. This is from hon L C Bebee and it’s directed to the Minister. Minister?

Question 7:

The MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT: Thank

you very much, hon House Chair and in replying to this question, I want to focus primarily on the job creation under the Expanded Public Works Programme, EPWP, also under the

Presidential Employment Stimulus because that is where we have reliable information to share with hon members.

Hon members, would understand that at the time when the COVID-

19 pandemic broke out. Our department was faced with two challenges: The first was that we had to surrender money for the battle against COVID-19 like all other departments, and we also had to transfer R961 million from the Expanded Public Works Programme to SanParks in order that we save 4158 jobs that exists in SanParks. SanParks gets 80% of its revenue from Tourism and the lockdown means that for the first six months of the year, there was virtually no revenue going to SanParks.

What this meant with regard to the Expanded Public Works Programme, we initial said we would create 61 000 work opportunities in the 2020-21 financial year, but we were only able to create 44 000 work opportunities. However, we did receive R1,9 billion from the Presidential Employment Stimulus funding. As a result, we were able to further expand our job creation process and this money was sufficient for us to begin the process of setting up 50 000 work opportunities.

Now these work opportunities are in municipal cleaning and greening, biodiversity, climate adaptation, maintenance of

infrastructure in SA National Parks, SanParks, the war on waste as well as in the Isimangaliso Wetland Park and also work opportunities in our botanical and zoological gardens. So, this is still in process and we have been informed by the National Treasury because when we received this money in new budget adjustment last year, the money that we have not yet finished spending, will be rollout over to the new financial year so that we can complete this important work. Thank you very much, hon Chairperson.

Ms L C BEBEE: Thank you very much, Chairperson, I would like to thank the hon Minister for the detailed response to the question. One must say that it is very encouraging to hear from the Minister that despite COVID-19, the department is continuing to save and create jobs. My question hon Minister will be: What is the contribution of the private sector in creating these jobs? I thank you, Chairperson.

The MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT: Thank

you very much, hon Bebee. Hon Bebee, you would understand that we have a significant involvement with a private sector in the fishing industry, forestry sector, biodiversity sector and also in the ocean economy. Last year when the lockdown happened, one spent considerable time meeting with civil

society and the private sector to understand the impact of the lockdown on these sectors, and also to work together with the sector to find ways to prevent job losses.

I think with all know that the Tourism sector, the private Tourism sector has been extremely hit hard. We know that my counterpart, the Minister of Tourism has also looked at relief measures for micro enterprises to enable them to weather the storm. I think that the fishing industry was really the industry that successfully managed to retain the most jobs. I wouldn’t say that they have been able to create new jobs, because fishing was an essential service. They are the industry, together with forestry which was also by enlarge an essential service. They have done more to maintain jobs.

However, I think, we have to honestly admit. Last year, the best we could do was to maintain jobs rather than creating new jobs. We have worked together with the private sector in our space to try ensure that jobs were retained as far as possible. Thank you very much, hon Chairperson.

Mr W A S AUCAMP: Thank you, hon Chairperson. May I proceed, hon Chairperson?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Yes, proceed.

Mr W A S AUCAMP: Hon Chairperson, thank you very much. Minister, in light of the fact that the expenditure on Programme 6 of your department, which entails the Expanded Public Works Programme constitutes an average of 43,9% of your department’s entire budget over the past three years, and in light of the fact that this proportion is estimated to drop with close to 2% over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework.

Would you agree that relative to your department’s total budget, job creation and especially job creation in greening economy will not be enjoying as much priority as it did prior to 2021? That this is incompatible to the President’s emphasis on job creation during the state of the nation address of 2021. Thank you, hon Chairperson.

The MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT: Thank

you very much, hon Aucamp. That’s a really interesting question you’ve posed. I supposed it goes back to the issue that hon Bebee raised which is: What is the role of the private sector in relation to the green economy? If you looked at the economic reconstruction and recovery programme. You will see that the green economy is one of the main sectors, in this regard. We are doing a lot of work around. Firstly, the waste economy, we are busy at the moment with section 18 Extended Producer Responsibility Programmes for plastic, e-

waste and also lighting waste. We see these programmes as being very significant both in terms of their potential to divert waste from landfills, but also to further support the important recycling industries that are run by the private sector in those areas.

I think that going forward, we will actually see a greater role in the development of green industries. I did, when I spoke in the President’s debate in the National Assembly, talk about the extent to which the programme around the renewable energies had a significant impact over the last few years on job creation. I think that what we see across the world is the development of the reconstruction and recovery programmes and commitment to build back in a more sustainable way. We see that green industries together with IT are the two areas across the world where job creation is actually happening.

We are working hard together with our sister department to make this a reality. We see this is important both in terms of our commitment, climate change and biodiversity, but also to managing very problematic areas such as waste in a more sustainable manner. Thank you very much.

Ms S A LUTHULI: Thank you so much, Chairperson and greetings to everyone. My question is: How much of the Presidential Employment Stimulus was allocated in your department?

*IsiZulu:*

Nanokuthi ucabanga ukuthi nalesabiwo esasibekiwe sizokwazi ukulungisa izinselelo zokwakha amathuba omsebenzi uMnyango wakho obhekene nazo yini? Ngiyabonga.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Concerning stimulus how much allocated? Will you be able to sustain this overtime?

Ms B T MATHEVULA: Chairperson.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Yes, Luthuli.

Ms B T MATHEVULA: Its hon Mathevula, Chairperson. I am rising on a point of order.

*Xitsonga:*

Manana B T MATHEVULA: Mutshamaxitulu, xana hi hava vahundzuluxeri kwalano leswi ku nga n’wina mi hundzuluxelaka naa?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: I didn’t get the question. If the question is about translation and related problems. We should let the service in place. I agree with you 100%. This is correctly interpreted and understood by myself. I would ask the Table to attend to the issue.

*Xitsonga:*

Manana B T MATHEVULA: Ndzi ri ina hiswona lulamisani mhaka ya vahundzuluxeri, Mutshamaxitulu.

*English:*

I was saying okay, Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Okay, it’s a very important

issue. It deserves a special attention.

The MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT: Thank

you very much, hon Luthuli for the question and my apologies for my linguistic limitations. Hon Luthuli, overall, we were allocated R1,9 billion of the Presidential Employment Stimulus funding. To date, we have managed to create 20 000 work of the

50 000 work opportunities, which we were supposed to create.

I have indicated that we have asked the National Treasury to give us rollover of the money into the new financial year, from the 1st April. At this stage, we don’t have the exact figures that we will be asking for. I think that, it is going to be very important because most of these projects are in the setup stage and we will then be able to roll them out over the medium term.

We have not had an indication as to whether or not we will get further money, in this regard and I would very much like a situation where there is sustainability of this grant. I think it is helping to provide opportunities, particularly to women and youth in areas where otherwise there are very, very few opportunities available. Perhaps, this is something we can agree on that we do need to ask the Minister of Finance that these programmes need to be sustainable even beyond the current and the next financial year. Thank you very much.

Question 2:

The MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT: It’s

the question on the Nationally Determined Contributions, NDC, I have got that as Question 2, hon Chair, but I can answer it.

South Africa did not submit its updated NDC to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in December 2020. We were together with many countries internationally, who are also signatories to the Paris Agreement who did not submit in December 2020, because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their processes.

This process of updating the NDC, if you want to make a fresh commitment, which we do want to make, is an elaborate process that includes technical work, extensive stakeholder consultation and also ultimately processes that will involve public participation. It was accepted by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, UNFCCC, that we can submit these NDCs before COP26 in November 2021.

To this end, the department spent last year undertaking the necessary technical work and we do have a draft revised NDC which is currently in the Cabinet process. And once that process is completed, we will put it out for public consultation. This will enable us to conclude the updating process and submit the updated NDC to the UNFCCC before COP26 in November this year. Thank you, Chairperson.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: There may be a bit of a problem about how this appears in the document in front of me. The persons to make a follow up would then be hon Cloete, Christians, Moletsane and A J Nyambi.

Mr A B CLOETE: Hon Chairperson, Minister, this is to a certain extent concerning but I do understand there might be some technical issues. But it is concerning especially if you hear the fact that you recently read that Covid-19 is a dress rehearsal for climate change response, so it is not going well for the dress rehearsal, Minister.

As you said, alongside India, Indonesia, Iran, Canada, Saudi Arabia and South Africa also did not provide the new NDC plans. But also, according to the Net Zero Economy Index, Minister, you probably would know about this, South Africa continues to show little progress in decoupling emissions from GDP. So, South Africa remains the worst performer in the G20 with carbon intensity in 2019 with China, the second worst performer both being well above the global average.

This begs the question, who is holding China accountable? Also compare that China’s real GDP growth of 6,1%. It’s evident that South Africa sees little economic value for the large

amounts of carbon we emit. In order to meet the goal to limit global temperature increase by 2%, some are arguing if we need to cut our emissions by as much as 75% by 2050 - that is for South Africa. Some argue that it would need hundreds of billions to do this.

Minister, let’s go into the money. Funding will be needed to implement these policies by 2050. South Africans are already being taxed with carbon taxes. The question is where is this money going, Minister? Is it not time that we start looking at ring-fencing? Nobody is talking at ring-fencing that you need to have the whole Public Finance Management Act, PFMA, to re- evaluate it.

But is it not time that we start looking at speaking to the Minister of Finance and say listen, we need to have money available to implement what we need to implement by 2050; so that we can ring-fence that, and that money is being used where it is intended and it doesn’t form part of the big global money pool of South Africa?

The MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT:

Chairperson, I guess this is precisely why the Presidential Climate Commission has been set up. And you would know that

the first meeting of the Presidential Climate Commission took place on 19 of February. All the Ministers in the economic cluster, including the Minister of Finance sit in the Presidential Climate Commission, as well as representatives from business, state-owned enterprises, civil society and organised labour.

The purpose of the climate commission is to say; here we are at the moment in a country where 90% of our electricity is generated by COG5 power stations. We want to reach a low carbon climate resilient economy and society by mid-century. What is the pathway to get there? What do we need to do in terms of changing our energy mix, in terms of changing our productive processes? How do we ensure that we will still have energy security? How do we ensure that we will have new technology and how are we going to finance it? That really is the work of the Presidential Climate Commission to identify those pathways and to look at what is available.

What I can share with you is that there is considerable finance available in the international space, what is known as Green Financing, to finance a just transaction in a number of countries that are carbon intensive. Part of what we are studying at the moment is what is available, what is it for

and what are the terms and conditions of the availability of this money. How would the private sector that primarily must be transforming their productive processes - how would they access that investment in a way that is affordable to them.

So the questions you are raising are very important. The climate commission and a number of government departments are seized with this issue of the just transmission. Because, we have to understand how we get from here to there and what technology would be required and what changes would be required, what financing would be required and how we make sure that we get there in a way that does not discriminate against the most vulnerable sectors of our society. Thank you very much.

Ms C LABUSCHAGNE: Hon Chair, this hon Labuschgne, I tried to raise my hand and wrote you a note. I will take hon Christians’ question.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Ok

Ms C LABUSCHAGNE: Can I continue?

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Please proceed.

Ms C LABUSCHAGNE: Thank you Chair, thank you hon Minister for your response. I want know, in light of the climate action tracker consultant’s view that on the 22nd of September 2020, South Africa‘s actions to keep global warming below 2˚c was seen as highly insufficient.

Given that and the information that you gave us on the NDCs that we want to resubmit and the information – which is very important – that you shared on the Presidential Climate Commission, I would like to know, will the NDCs that is going to be resubmitted before the COP26 before November be aligned with the process of what is going on in the Presidential Climate Commission and will that be – if they sort of track our actions - will that then be moved from highly insufficient to a level that is more acceptable? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT:

Chairperson, hon Labuschagne, as I said, the technical work has been done. What we will do in a month is that we will put it out for public comment. You will be able to evaluate these yourselves.

We have agreed that the climate commission would obviously want to make submissions on what has been released. I think

what is very important to understand hon Labuschagne is that our energy generation is one aspect of our CO2 emissions, other major contributors to CO2 emissions are the transport sector, the industrial sector, the manufacturing sector, the mining sector and so on.

What you would understand is that this process has to be a process where all emitters buy-in to the changes that need to come. It is why government can’t just do this on its own and decide on its own because there are a whole lot of external actors that are going to have to make commitments; that are going to have to make investments. It’s not a simple process. But we think it is really important that this goes out for public comment and everybody involved can hear what scientists and environmentalists think on the one hand about their level of ambition and what they are able to contribute on the other hand.

So we are looking forward to that process and we have reported to the climate commission that we are going to engage in it and they have agreed that they will be part of the two. Thank you.

Mr M S MOLETSANE: Chair, Minister, when I listen to you, you clarified that South Africa didn’t contribute last year. You also clarified that there are preparations that are in place this year. I just want to check with you because South Africans are listening as we speak now, just so that they must be at least in the know that this year will South Africa ready and is South Africa going to contribute come November 26?

South Africa is going to play its role and contribute to the climate summit in Glasgow. Thank you, Chairperson.

The MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT: Hon

Moletsane, we are obviously don’t know yet exactly what form COP26 would be in, but South Africa is committed to participate in; and we are committed to working with our fellow African countries on the continent to make sure that all three aspects of the Paris Accord are adhered to. So we want to see ambition on reduction of emissions. We want to see ambition on dealing with adaptation to climate change and we want to see ambition on commitment to the means of finance and technology for implementation of the changes that are necessary. Thank you very much.

Mr A J NYAMBI: Chairperson, greetings to the Minister, sometimes an impression is created that moving to COP26 and

this very important emission the vulnerable poorest of the poor historically disadvantaged is left behind.

If you can share with us some steps taken by your good selves and the department that they play their part in making sure that they are not left behind at times, as we get a sense at times that we tend to forget and make it a domain of some selected few that are advantaged in many things. Thank you.

The MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT:

Chairperson, I think when we talk about adjust transition to a low carbon resilient economy and society inherent in that concept of just, is the concept that in all transitions there are winners and losers.

What I think we understand is that if you look at our current energy generation, we know that already there are power stations in Mpumalanga that are due for closure by 2025 and 2030. We are currently working with Eskom on proof of concept project on Komati Power Station. So we are looking at how could you convert that power station to alternative use? How could we make sure that in doing that you save existing jobs? How can you create alternative industries in Mpumalanga?

Industries that would not be depended solely on core value

chain. And how do you understand the issue of the future of work in a low carbon economy and society.

So these are – when we spoke about the role of the climate commission – I think one of the big concerns of the organised labour in that commission Komati PowerStation is, how are we going to ensure that we protect current jobs? That we create future jobs and that we ensure that down the line young people are being trained and developed so that they can fit in the future of work in this low carbon economy in society.

These are fundamental issues to adjust transition. It can’t be just if those who are most vulnerable are the ones that are going to carry the burden of this transition. It’s a very important issue that all of the participating departments and also the climate commission would have to address. Thank you, hon Chairperson.

Question 14:

The MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT: Hon

Chairperson, our department is aware of illegal sand mining that is taking place in KwaZulu-Natal. Although mining activities and the enforcement actions in relation thereto fall within the mandate of the Department of Mineral Resources

and Energy, our department has been supporting this department in both KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape.

Together with the SA Police Service we have been conducting joint operations targeting all environmental transgressions within the four coastal provinces under Operation Phakisa Initiative 5. A number of these operations during 2020 focussed on illegal sand mining and we are working actively with Department of Mineral Resources and Energy in planning and executing these operations. We participated with other departments which include Water and Sanitation, Economic Development, Tourism, SA Revenue Services, the State Security Agency and the SA Police Service.

From July 2020 to date, we planned and executed seven operations targeting illegal mining, and several arrests were affected and a total of nine case dockets were registered.

With regard to Question 2, the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy is a permanent member of the compliance and enforcement working group under Operation Phakisa Initiative

5. Ongoing discussions take place in this forum and joint operations are continuously planned and executed. We also meet regularly at deputy director-general level, as well as through an interdepartmental project implementation committee, where

these matters are discussed at the strategic level. Thank you very much.

Ms C LABUSCHAGNE: Thank you very much, Minister. As you know, somebody has revealed that our country’s freshwater ecosystems are being compromised by various factors like overextraction, water pollution, toxins and all those things that you are all aware of. As a result thereof, our rivers and wetlands and many of the species within them, count most as the threatened ecosystems and species in our country. Uncontrolled further damage causing activities such as this illegal sand mining, will further change and destroy these ecosystems and the likelihoods of the surrounding communities.

Minister, as you clearly explained the enforcement role is with the Department of Mineral Resources, my question to you is, “Are you willing to prioritise a national monitoring and standardisation programme to ensure that sand mining in riverbeds and lakes do not exceed the natural process of resupply of sand from upstream, or does something like that already exist that I am just not aware of?” Thank you.

The MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT: I

think that there are two places where we can co-ordinate and

work with the Department of Mineral Resources and also the Department of Water and Sanitation, because obviously they have a deep concern about pollution of our drinking water supply. So, the first would be in the compliance and enforcement working group, and the second would be in the interdepartmental project implementation committee. In one of them we identify where illegalities are taking place and we plan joint action, and in the other one we discuss the strategic level - the kind of concerns that you are raising that arise from the SA National Biodiversity Institute, Sanbi, study, and we look at all rounded mechanisms that can help us to better protect our river systems.

So I think that we are already actively engaged in this whole process. If I can just give you an idea of the operations that took place from 10 to 15 July when we were dealing with illegal sand mining in central eThekwini. On 17 August we were working in Umgeni River, and from 10 to 11 September we were working at Reservior Hills, Ohlanga River and Bot River and kwaDabeka. From 22 September to 5 October we were working on the KwaZulu-Natal south coast and the north coast, and from 9 October to 23 November on the KwaZulu-Natal South Coast and central Durban. From 7 January to 22 January we were working

throughout the KwaZulu-Natal coast. So, you can see that we have sustained and ongoing operations that are taking place.

Mr A ARNOLDS: Thank you House Chairperson, through you to the hon Minister. We all know that illegal sand mining causes considerable environmental risk to the surrounding communities, and you have mentioned the joint operations in the fight against illegal sand mining. Minister, can you just tell us how confident are you that the environmental management inspectors are winning against illegal sand mining in terms of the fight against this environmental risk, if not, why not, if so, why are we seeing an increase in illegal sand mining? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT: Thank

you very much, hon Arnolds. I think that one of the things that we know about illegal sand mining is that it’s actually a highly organised operation and that in many instances it does involve syndicated crime, so it is not just somebody who decides to get a little bit of sand for a personal building project. I think that this is why we are working on sustained and repeated operations in KwaZulu-Natal and in the Eastern Cape where a lot of operations are happening in very pristine

and environmentally sensitive areas such as Coffee Bay and Mpanzana and Port St Johns.

We have actually been working on blocking the access roads because obviously if you want to engage in these activities you have to take trucks down into the river and back. As I said, we are not responsible for this, primarily it is Department of Mineral Resources’s responsibility, but we are actively involved with them and we believe that ongoing and sustained operations are the only way that we are going to interrupt this nefarious activity.

Ms T C MODISE: Thank you very much hon Chairperson, and thank you Minister for your response. Hon Minister, my follow-up question is, “Has the department been able to identify the reason why this is only a problem in certain provinces?” Thank you very much, hon Chair.

The MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT: Well,

I suppose it is a problem in provinces where you have large communities residing alongside coastal areas that are largely undeveloped. I think it is very difficult in a highly tourist intensive area to be wielding heavy trucks in the beach without somebody seeing you and intervening. You would

understand that in a number of rural areas in KwaZulu-Natal and in the Eastern Cape you would have stretches of very pristine beach where there would not necessarily be tourist infrastructure conducting oversight on a regular basis on those beaches.

We have to understand that there are high levels of unemployment across our country, particularly. People are suffering extremely as a result of COVID-19 pandemic. I think what this means is that there is a ready supply of persons who are prepared to be recruited by syndicates to engage in these operations. Obviously, enforcement is one important aspect of work and it has to be ongoing but of course other works that we are doing in terms of job creation is also very important. In this regard I think we are trying to see where our Expanded Public Works Programmes that protect the coastal areas are but we also where to increase those so that we can offer alternatives to people who might otherwise be victims of crime syndicates. Thank you.

Question 8:

The MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT: Thank

you very much, Chairperson. Globally, aquaculture is an important source of food security and it is the fastest

growing food production sector with a growth rate of 5,8% annually since 2010. As the aquaculture sector in South Africa is still relatively small, it does have significant growth potential and the benefits of promoting sustainable growth in the sector are, include, but not limited to contributing to food security, creating sustainable work opportunities, fostering economic development, stimulating rural development and livelihoods, attracting foreign direct investment and, of course most importantly, sustaining environmental integrity.

In recognition of this growth potential benefits, in 2014 government initiated a programme called Operation Phakisa to fast-track sectors of potential growth in the oceans economy. The aquaculture sector was one of those sectors where we invested and where we developed. This sector, like most economic sectors locally and globally, has been negatively impacted on by the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact on the sector is mainly loss of international markets particularly for abalone and oysters that had large exports markets in Asia.

There has also been a drop in sales and a drop in the price of products locally and internationally.

With regard to oysters, we have a serious problem because the Chinese government delisted oysters as a species that can be

legally imported into China. I think this was in response to concerns around the fact that oyste4rs are exported live to China and there were concerns around zoonotic diseases.

The lockdowns and restrictions on the restaurants trade and so on in a number of ocean economies has resulted in the price of abalone dropping by over 30%. In our own local markets we found that the restaurant industry was severely impacted on by a decline in tourism and also by lockdowns. This affected demands for mussels, tilapia, oysters, trout and catfish.

To address these challenges we have established a task team made up of the industry and key government departments such as the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition. The purpose of this task team is to collectively address the short and medium-terms challenges. Key interventions that we are engaged in are first of all trying to unlock new markets for our aquaculture products particularly in the European Union through our multilateral trade relations. Secondly, we have ongoing negotiations with the Chinese government to relist the oyster species. We are trying to reduce red tapes and allow the abalone products to be sold in the local markets. We are also conducting feasibility studies on acceptance of saving locally produced aquaculture products such tilapia and catfish

in residential institutions such correctional facilities. If we can do this, this would unlock local procurements.

Guided by the 2019 marketing and awareness strategy we are also developing a number of promotional materials that can be flatted both locally and internationally to advertise our products.

With regard to Question 8(b) I have already said that the aquaculture sector is one of the fastest grower with 5,8% growth rate since 2010 internationally and in our own country the sector has grown by 9% since 2010.

In terms of employment, the sector currently employs about

6 500 people and over 7 000 metric tons were produced by the sector in 2019. Thank very much, hon Chairperson.

Ms L C BEBEE: Thank you, Chairperson. Once again thank you very much hon Minister for your detailed response. Also, it is very encouraging to hear about the proactive measures taken to adjust challenges in the industry. My question is, are there specific programmes and interventions to integrate emerging black farmers particularly women and youth in these interventions? Thank you very much, Chairperson.

The MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT: Thank

you very much, hon Bebee. Yes, in the Operation Phakisa programme there have been a number of initiatives to support emerging aquaculture farmers in a number of areas. Obviously, with the current situation where there is market instability this would be affecting those emerging and developing farmers the most. That is why we are looking at mechanisms to try and unlock domestic markets. As I indicated we are doing feasibility studies on whether recipients will find eating fish products acceptable. Obviously, if we can unlock these domestic markets and unlock government procurements for institutions such as feeding schools, correctional facilities and so on, that would be a very important way of stabilising the domestic markets.

I had an opportunity to fairly recently visit a project in the Eastern Cape. In this area they were actually turning fish into fish cakes, sausages and so on. It was very palatable and very well received by local members of the community who were buying from that particular factory. So, it is those feasibility studies that we are looking into to see whether those products can be palatable for the domestic markets.

Ms S A LUTHULI: Thank you, Chairperson. Greetings again! My question is, what are some of the major policy and legislative constraints that have limiting aquaculture route, and do you believe that your department’s plan would be adequate in addressing job creations? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT: Thank

you very much, hon Luthuli. That’s a very important question. There is a long outstanding Aquaculture Bill that we want to bring to the National Assembly this year. I think that that is a very important piece of legislation to deal with the enabling environment that you talked about. I think that will obviously give certainty and policy stability to the sector.

Thank you.

Mr M R BARA: Thank you, Chairperson. Thank you, Minister for your replies. Minister, are there any plans to invite interested parties to establish abalone ranches along the Western Cape coastline as part of the aqua and marine culture programme within the next three years; and if so, what is the relevant information that can be shared with the communities? Thank you, Chairperson.

The MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT: Today

I don’t have details of new projects that are going to be set up, but I can share with you that there are already extensive commercial ranches and also small scale facilities. If you give me the question in writing I will be able to give you further details. Thank you very much.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: I think hon Bara will be happy with that.

Mr M R BARA: Yes, I will do that. Thank you so much

Mr A B CLOETE: Chairperson, on a point of order: I also have a follow-up question to the Minister.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: But you were not here! Yes, you were there earlier on, but where were you?

Mr A B CLOETE: I was there and you were waiting for hon Bebee at that stage.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Okay, let’s allow you to

raise your question before thanking the Minister.

Mr A B CLOETE: Thank you, Chairperson. Thank you, Minister. I want to talk to you about the aquaculture technology demonstration centre in Gariep which you probably know about because actually it was a brainchild of your party’s secretary-general when he was Free State premier. It was funded by the Chinese government with an upfront investment of R45 million, plus another R15 million each year for three years, totally to nearly R90 million. The [Inaudible.] department when the Deputy Minister visited the centre during

December last year that the R3 million facility is just a drop in the ocean of the amount of the money that was spent there. Maybe it’s not because that’s the point. Nobody actually knows how much money was spent on that misconceived project from the outset. In the Free State we know those small politically- driven and grounded economic realities. It is also very difficult to get official information about the demonstration centre and whether it is still operational. I went there in November last year and all I saw was, in fact, a damaged mine building and very little evidence of a fish.

Also, in recent provincial planning documents, the national government’s annual aquaculture year book and the annual Free State business administration, there is no mention of that facility. Now specialists in special research concluded that

there is no demand for fresh water fish such as bubble and [Inaudible.] and nobody in the Free State is to grow them economically. Minister, what is the current status of this fishery project?

The MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT: Once

again, hon Cloete, this is a new question. But you have asked me this question before and I have answered you very extensively that there are two projects there, one is a project of our department and the project is still functional, and the other project was of the department of the Free State which I can’t account for.

If you go back to the questions for written reply you asked me last year you will find full and detailed answers to those questions. I want to suggest that you do that and I want to suggest that those questions that relate to the demonstration centre and the partnership with the Chinese government, so on and so forth that fall under the Department of Agriculture in the Free State, need to be posed in that legislature to that MEC and not to me. Thank you.

The Council adjourned at 16:54.