**TUESDAY, 25 MAY 2021**

***PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVIINCES***

The Council met at 10:00.

The House Chairperson: Committees and Oversight took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayers or meditation.

The House Chairperson: Committees and Oversight announced that the virtual sitting constituted a sitting of the National Council of Provinces.

**APPROPRIATION BILL**

(Policy debate)

Vote No 32 – Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:

The MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT: Hon

House Chair, our Deputy Minister Ms Makhotso Sotyu, hon Tebogo

Modise and committee members, chairpersons of the entities reporting to our department, Director-General Ms Nomfundo Tshabalala, team environment, CEO’s of our public entities, hon members, in his weekly letter to the nation on Monday 26 April, President Ramaphosa said:

Even as we continue to fight the Covid-19 pandemic, tackling climate change is a national priority for South Africa.

In this regard, the President went on to say that as a country we are committed to contributing our fair share to the global climate effort. He urged the newly established Presidential Climate Change Commission to advise government on an ambitious and just transition to a low carbon economy. The commission will oversee co-ordination of necessary policies to meet a long-term net zero emissions target and advise us on opportunities presented by the transition to a low carbon development and the pathways to achieve it.

The late Professor Bob Scholes, a long-time friend and advisor to this department, who led several high profile studies on climate change and environmental issues, noted that when it comes to taking action in relation to climate change,

collective action is easier to achieve at a local than a global scale. This is because, for adaptation actions, the benefits accrue to the people taking the action rather than to the whole world.

Last year. Cabinet approved the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy. We have supported all district municipalities to develop climate change adaptation strategies and through the Let’s Respond Toolkit to we have assisted to mainstream climate change into the integrated development plans municipalities. We have also begun training on the Coastal Climate Change Vulnerability Index and Decision Support Tool in three coastal district municipalities. Before the end of this calendar year, we will have reviewed provincial climate change strategies for Limpopo, North West, KwaZulu-Natal and the Northern Cape in partnership with international advisors.

As you may be aware, the public consultation process is underway in provinces on the revised Nationally Determined Contribution which will be deposited ahead of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in November. The final draft will be approved by Cabinet before submission to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,

UNFCCC. Stakeholder sessions have already taken place in Mpumalanga, Limpopo, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and North West. It is also important to share with you that the Climate Change Bill is on its way through the Cabinet system and it will be submitted to you for consideration during this financial year. The department has, for a number of years, had a highly successful partnership with provinces in providing annual state of the environment updates.

In 2019, the department moved to a web-based state of environment information report. The successful release of the SA Environment – 2020 on 5 May, demonstrates efficient and effective co-operative government in action, and I would like to thank provinces for their dedication in compiling the provincial information that adds such richness to the annual updates.

It is clear from the state of environment updates that South Africa’s air quality, particularly in the national priority areas, needs our urgent and significant attention.

Let me reiterate that this is a concurrent function and we will never succeed in improving air quality at community level without the hard work of all spheres of government.

First and foremost, there must be adequate and continuous monitoring of air quality. The resources for air quality monitoring in the priority areas are allocated to the SA Weather Services in a separate and dedicated grant, to manage the 17 stations in the national priority areas and to provide support to local government. This approach has worked effectively since 2010.

For those stations outside the priority areas, the department identified 43 strategically located stations which are necessary for national baseline monitoring. We have taken over the operation, management and maintenance of these stations for a period of five years, until 2022. The programme also includes comprehensive capacitation of local government to take over once this project is concluded.

In addition, we are undertaking practical on-the-job training programmes with local government on the management and maintenance of monitoring of the stations. These training programs are co-ordinated with the support of the SA Weather Service and the National Association for Clean Air.

In April 2020, we enacted tougher minimum emission standards for industries listed in the National Environmental

Management: Air Quality Act. These, more stringent standards are designed reduce emissions and lead to continuous improvement in air quality.

As part of the department’s zero tolerance on compliance and enforcement approach, we have taken a tough line with Eskom and Sasol, and issued several compliance notices. In this regard, we will not be issuing any exemptions to compliance with minimum emission standards after 2025. So all facilities will need to comply by this date. In recent times, Eskom’s Kendal facility, situated in the Highveld Airshed Priority Area, was required to shutdown of one of its poor performing units until such time that it could demonstrate legal compliance. In this instance, the Director of Public Prosecutions has taken an unprecedented decision to prosecute Eskom for violations of its Atmospheric Emissions Licence at the Kendal facility.

With regard to regulatory compliance monitoring and enforcement, a concerted effort is being made to ensure all sectors operating within the priority areas meet compliance and enforcement requirements. This initiative forms part of an integrated intergovernmental enforcement campaign initiated in the last financial year with representation from all three

spheres of government. We will continue to support the environmental management inspectorate capacity at the local level as well as well as an overall part of the district development model.

Hon members, I can report that a number of landmark investigations, led by environmental management inspectors within the department, resulted in the conviction of ArcelorMittal’s Vanderbijlpark facility, which is situated in the Vaal Airshed Priority Area for violating the terms of its licence. Similarly, Enviroserv, which operates a landfill site in KwaZulu-Natal was convicted for contravening air quality laws relating to odour. The cumulative fines imposed on these two companies came to approximately R10 million. These fines will assist in enhancing the capability of environmental management inspectors within the local level of government to efficiently perform their compliance and enforcement duties.

Hon members, our country boasts 21 national parks, and a wide selection of provincial and local nature reserves. We have launched a drive to reposition our country’s protected areas for the new deal for people with nature. The present state of protected areas in South Africa is marred by serious funding and capacity constraints, which leads to considerable

fragmentation, duplication and inefficiency of management arrangements. Furthermore, protected areas managed by provinces and local governments are not realising their economic and development potential.

In light of this, I have kick-started a process of investigating the rationalisation of protected areas by focussing on, amongst others, the reduction of fragmentation of functional responsibilities and the overlap of functions. This project also aims to find ways of improving the financial viability of these areas and increasing their economic role by enhancing their ability to attract tourism, generate revenue and contribute to the local economy. Provinces and local government are key role players in this process. Consultations are ongoing within all three spheres.

Hon members, since the approval of the National Biodiversity Economy Strategy by Cabinet in 2015, a number of strides have been made. This sector that contributes R73 billion worth of ecosystem services to gross domestic product, GDP, and

R13,6 billion derived from domestic and international hunting activities. Through the implementation of the biodiversity economy programmes, it is anticipated that 110 000 new jobs

will be created by 2030 with an additional contribution of R47 billion to our GDP.

Through the National Wildlife Donation and Custodianship Policy Framework, which guides the review and implementation of Provincial Game Donation and Custodianship Policies, we expect to have released 15 000 head of game as part of the wildlife transformation programme by the 2023. To date, almost

15 000 animals have been pledged or committed by Sanparks, the Department of Defence and the private sector to support black farmers and communities to engage meaningfully in the wildlife ranching.

The SA National Parks has approved over 3 000 animals for just over 30 beneficiaries in the second donation window. These include previously disadvantaged communities from North West, Eastern Cape, Limpopo, Free State and Northern Cape provinces.

Additionally, the department is supporting emerging game farmers with related infrastructure, such as game fence and water, game capture and translocation costs to the tune of R810 million over the next three years. This budget has already been allocated to successful applicants in a number of provinces.

The recruitment of 300 wildlife extension officers who will be supporting emerging game farmers across the country has been approved. To this end, I will be working closely with the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, conservation management authorities, veterinary associations and academic institutions to secure their support for this programme, and to assist in the training and provision of veterinarians and animal health technicians.

Our department through its bioprospecting and biotrade programme has committed R251 million to support emerging bioprospectors and biotraders in the next three years so they can participate meaningfully in this industry. This is part of our transformation drive across all nine provinces. We are working hard to develop benefit sharing agreements that are fair and equitable as we transform this sector.

Hon members, employing the Extended Public Works Programme approach to job creation, in this financial year we aim to create 66 000 work opportunities in the clearing of alien invasive species and wetland rehabilitation. This will include primarily women, young people as well as people with disabilities in areas where there are not other work

opportunities. These projects will be implemented across all provinces and in partnership with municipalities.

The environment sector local government support strategy has recently been developed and approved to support municipalities through various short to medium-term mandate interventions to become environmentally sustainable and climate change resilient. This local government support strategy is aligned to the district development model in that it aims to reduce inconsistency and incoherence of support provided to local government. The strategy aims to build planning and implementation capacity and to ensure that municipalities more effectively deliver services. We have worked with municipalities to ensure that we integrate these plans into municipal support plans and also into the integrated development plans, IDPs of municipalities.

Historically, the vast majority of people were excluded from coastal access through unequal structural and spatial apartheid planning and laws. The Integrated Coastal Management Act has placed an obligation on local government to facilitate access to beaches through public servitudes and made it an offence for anyone to prevent access to beaches. Local government has not been able to implement these provisions

across our country due to capacity challenges. The department has, therefore, prioritised implementation with provinces and municipalities to facilitate access incrementally along South Africa’s coastline. We thank provinces and local governments in collaborating with us in this regard.

Marine litter, including plastic litter, is of increasing global and national concern. For the past 18 months, the government has implemented a pilot marine litter prevention programme in the eThekwini Municipality. We aim with the Presidential Stimulus Initiative to expand this programme into 16 coastal districts with the target of creating a minimum of 1 600 work opportunities. [Inaudible.] we rely on your partnership to make sure that this works.

Apart from dealing with marine litter, the department supports municipalities to carry out their functions by funding waste management licences for unlicensed landfill. This process will enable municipalities in seven sites in the Free State, North West, Mpumalanga and Eastern Cape to access funding from various funders to ensure that landfill sites are compliant.

This will be enhanced by providing training to improve the management of landfill sites. The training emphasises internal

auditing and development of local controls to ensure ongoing compliance.

Furthermore, through the work we have been doing with the National Treasury, municipalities will be able to use the infrastructure grants to fund the yellow fleet and other land fleet vehicles required. Furthermore, together with provincial Departments of Environment would be providing support in implementing projects and programmes in districts across the country with the aim of assisting districts to realise an environment that is not harmful to health. A key programme in this regard is the municipal cleaning and greening programme that would be implemented in all the municipalities.

The provinces will ensure that the municipal waste management facilities are authorised and operated according to conditions of the issued authorisations, whilst the department will be providing capacity building programmes.

Hon members, policy-makers, management and scientist have been discussing the lack of integration between Terrestrial and Marine Spatial Planning. Questions have arisen about the implications of coastal spatial planning inputs into the land and sea interactions discussions.

The department is working with a number of international partners to ensure a number of demonstration projects funded by the global environmental facilities to ensure strategic co- operation to implement demonstration projects regarding Land - Sea Interaction.

Within the aquaculture subsector of the oceans economy, projects are being implemented in inland and coastal provinces focusing on both fresh water and marine species. Of the 45 projects in implementation, 28 are in production phase and distributed across the provinces.

With regard to the legislative regime for aquaculture, consultations on the Aquaculture Development Bill are being finalised and we aim to table this Bill in Parliament in this financial year.

Hon members, allow me to conclude by thanking you for all the hard work that has gone into process amendments to the National Forests Act and the National Environmental Management Laws as well as your consistent oversight programme on all matters that concern us. I express my sincere thanks to our Director General Ms Nomfundo Tshabalala and team environment

which includes the CEOs and chairpersons of the boards of our entities for all your hard work each and every day.

Finally, allow me to thank our MECs and mayors who carry joint responsibility with me for ensuring a healthy environment. We look forward to building a solid partnership with you that will effectively combat climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental degradation and desertification. Lastly, let me thank my sister in all the struggles and difficulties that we face in team environment, our Deputy Minister Ms Makhotso Sotyu. Without your support we would not have managed to achieve those thongs we have achieved. Thank you very much.

Ms T C MODISE: Chairperson, hon Minister, hon Deputy Minister, hon members of the NCOP and special delegates, good morning.

The Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries and its entity has tabled Annual Performance Plans, APA, for 2021-22.

The department derives its mandate from section 24 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and reads as follows:

Everyone has a right- (a) to an environment that is not harmful to their health or wellbeing; and (b) to have the environment protected, for the benefit of present and future generations, through reasonable legislative and other measures that: (i) promote pollution and ecological degradation; (ii) promote conservation; and (iii) secure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development.

It is worth noting that since 1994 the democratic South African government has made tremendous steps in ensuring that adequate legislative framework is put in place in order to realise its constitutional mandate.

To this end, this Parliament enacted a number of cross-cutting pieces of legislation and includes, for example, the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act, National Water Act, and a number of sector specific pieces of legislation under the National Environmental Management Act, NEMA.

This is in keeping with Parliament’s mandate of actively

passing laws and overseeing the implementation of policies

that are pro-poor, gender responsive and environmentally sensitive.

The 2021 state of the nation address outlined government’s commitment to an economic recovery pathway that takes into account climate change that threatens our environmental health, socioeconomic development and economic growth.

Our government is committed to the not only to fulfilling the country’s commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Paris Agreement, but also its promises of a health environment as stipulated in our Constitution and a sustainable economic development.

The 2021-22 budget vote 32 takes place under very trying global health and economic circumstances. The COVID-19 pandemic outbreak last year has left many economies under severe economic strain and our own economy is no exception. This is compounded by the fact that our economy was already struggling to grow and to create the much needed job opportunities.

We note that since 2013 our economic has recorded 2% growth rate and this meant decreased Gross Domestic Product, GDP, per

capita as a result our national debt to GDP has been steadily increasing.

Minister Tito Mboweni, in his 2021 budget speech, indicated that government’s fiscal consolidation seeks to promote economic growth while bringing debt under control with an intention to stabilise it at 88,9% of GDP by 2025-26.

The select committee has taken note of the impact of budget reductions in this vote allocations and the impact this would have on specific programmes such as biodiversity and conservation.

Less allocations in the Biodiversity and Conservation Programme will affect iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority and SA National Park, whose line of march is to conserve biodiversity in South Africa.

The committee recommended that following to the Minister: in light of the economic challenges and budget cuts, the department should work closely with state-owned enterprises, SOEs, to streamline their operations and services to ensure continuity of critical services and contribution towards the economic recovery;

There is a need to fast track the eradication and control of Invasive Alien Plants, specifically those directly affecting our limited water resources and water bodies like the Water Hyacinth. We welcome the targeted Integrated Permitting System that will assist organisations who contribute to controlling the Invasive Alien Plants through processing them into new and useful products;

In light of the ongoing water shortages across most of our municipalities, waste dumping in our water bodies is a continuing challenge such as dumping of disposable nappies and other forms of waste. Provinces and municipalities should be brought on-board in the Waste Economy Master Plan and be assisted in waste management to protect our limited resources;

There is a need to continue to improve and maintain our weather and air quality monitoring station networks to enable for timeously production ... [sound cut off] ... early warnings to protect our communities and infrastructure from extreme weather events.

The department should work closely with the provinces and municipalities, especially those with limited capacity, to

assist them in developing and implementing their own Climate Change Adaptation Strategies.

The implicit reading of the South African Constitution presents us not only with the embodiment of a reformative, transformative, restorative and redressive character of our constitutional democracy but equally presents us with a salient developmental aspiration of our democratic state.

Developmental state theorists define a developmental state as a state which is able to set a developmental goals and willing to create and sustain a policy climate and an institutional structure that promotes economic growth and state driven socioeconomic development.

A developmental state is understood as such a state that brings about rapid and sustainable transformation in a country’s economic and or social conditions through active, intensive and effective intervention in the structural causes of economic or social underdevelopment.

This objective can be achieved by a state that is active and does not only look at producing regulations and legislations.

The greatest concern, as legislators, is on the impact that policy implementation has on ordinary people on the ground.

The National Development Plan, NDP, said that a developmental state needs to be capable and requires leadership, sound policies, skilled managers and clear work lines of accountability, appropriate systems and consistent and fair application of rules.

It is for this reason that we are encouraged by the approaching taken by the department in responding to some of the audit findings made by the Auditor-General, AG, for the previous financial year. Thank you, the department, you’re doing very well.

Notwithstanding the reductions in the vote allocation and the impact it will place on the compensation of employees and further limitations on new employee recruitment, we are optimistic that this vote will see the department responding well to matters of good governance and compliance with the legislative requirements for effective financial management.

This Vote will again contribute towards the nation’s transformation agenda by realising the placement of about 50% in senior management positions.

South Africa has one of the longest coastlines on the African continent and this provides a great lot of potential for economic growth and development.

The Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan recognises the potential presented by the small harbours to contribute significantly to local economic development. Again, we note progress that the department has made in allocating fishing rights to a total of about 110 small-scale fishing

co-operatives in the Northern Cape, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu- Natal.

This year will see further allocation of about 31 fishing rights in the Western Cape province. We recognise more still needs to be done in helping develop the small-scale fisheries and we would like to call upon various stakeholders in the fisheries sector to continue playing a meaningful role in helping the development of small-scale fisheries. The Aquaculture Bill is to be, as presented in the Annual Performance Plan, will be revived this year.

The department plans to stimulate the economic growth through Chemicals and Waste Economy Phakisa by creating 5 500 jobs over the mid-term. This year the department targets to create

2 000 of much needed jobs.

Lesson learned from the COVID-19 pandemic is the importance of and minimal cost associated with prevention and preparedness to ensure that we sustain and improve service delivery under trying times.

In conclusion, the budget vote for consideration and adoption by this House, I would like to indicate that the select committee had raised its concerns with the department and are very much encouraged by the proactive and progressive stance taken by the Minister and Deputy Minister in responding to these, including those raised by the Auditor-General.

This vote is very transformative and will meaningfully contribute towards the achievement of the department’s mandate.

As we celebrate Africa Day I would like take this moment to reflect on the struggles of African Women, like myself, have overcome and are faced with. The apartheid government

systemically sidelined minorities, especially women, with their policies. Under the ANC government we have seen more women been empowered and actively participating the economy through all sectors. [sound cut off]

Ms C LABUSCHAGNE: Hon Chair, hon Minister and hon members, the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment’s vision and mission statement namely “to lead South Africa in sustainable development towards a better quality of life for all” is essential given that we are a developing country struggling to keep our economy afloat.

We all desperately want a better quality of life and we all know our quality of life is being influenced by various factors such as if we have access or not to basic services such as water, electricity, sewerage, refuse removal, a job and food to eat.

Yes, Chair, I am aware that we are not busy with the COGTA Budget Vote, but all these basic services and needs cannot be met if we do not ensure today that our natural resources are being protected, conserved and sustained for tomorrow. The serious impact of the coronavirus is showcasing our vulnerabilities as human beings, as well as our extreme

vulnerabilities when governments fail in their role to plan, mitigate and adapt to natural disasters, as we are experiencing at the moment.

South Africa’s response to Covid-19 and the devastating economic impact thereof, mostly due to poor planning and decisions, will be part of our history. Against the backdrop of cadre deployment, state capture, corruption, and a lack of political will to save our country instead of political identities and networks ... [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr A J Nyambi): Hon Mmoiemang, please!

Ms C LABUSCHAGNE: ... to ensure a better quality of life for all. That being said, Chair, another crisis happening is the visible extreme weather conditions as part of climate change and impact thereof on our daily lives. Whether you agree with the causes of climate change or not, the fact of the matter is that we have to cope with the impact thereof, just as we have to learn to cope with Covid-19.

This department is currently the custodian and driver of South Africa’s response to climate change. We have adopted the Paris Agreement which forms part of every Conference of Parties,

COP, which grants access to funding from climate change donor organisations and institutions as one of the things.

In the Annual Performance Plan, it is rightfully indicated that he department continue to focus on a low-carbon economy and a climate resilient society as well as facilitating an economy that is low in carbon emissions and uses natural resources efficiently by facilitating the implementation of green initiatives and projects. It makes reference to Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and National Climate Change Bill that will equip South Africa to manage and mitigate climate change effects. This is all good and well and highly appreciated, Minister, but what is not appreciated is the inability of this government to break through their silo model of functioning in a time where we need innovative, transversal and out of the box thinking and management. An illustration of that is the management of our energy resources, our electricity crisis with Eskom, our link to coal and fossil fuels and the inability and lack of political will to steer the country on a road of renewable energy as a response of climate action.

That brings me to the recent solutions of power ships for emergency power. This department received the Environmental

Impact Assessments, considering social and economic impact on the environment, including marine resources and small scale fishing of the Karporship on 26 April 2021 and has 57 days to respond.

Hon Chair, the Eskom crisis is every person’s crisis as it has an economic impact on each and every person, family, business, industry and organisation. The environmental impact and the sustainability of these power ships, is therefore the business of all our people. I call on Minister Creecy to not only communicate the department’s response on this EIA but also to publish the report as it will demonstrate the government’s willingness to transparency and accountability. South Africans are in desperate need to trust the government on decisions that is impacts on our lives and livelihoods.

Hon Chair, we also have our draft Nationally Determined Contributions approved and considered by Cabinet only in March this year as South Africa’s commitment under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change ahead of the 26th Conference of Parties in Glasgow in Nov 2021.

The Climate Parliament is going to launch the Green Grid Initiative at COP26. Energy Ministers from eight leading

countries will be part of this initiative. If South Africa is serious in sustainability and a better life for all and determined to implement green projects and initiatives by prioritising renewable energy as one of the solutions, not only should a delegation of this department attend this COP, but the President, guided by Minister Creecy, should commit to a green grid initiative in South Africa. That would be a solution for our rural areas and poor communities against the backdrop of failing local governments, instead of the so- called district development plan.

Hon Chair, climate change models provide us guidance and direction on how we need to respond to our risk exposure. Experts in the field of climate change like Prof Bruce Hewit from the University of Cape Town highlights that risk exposure is regional dependant and thus requires detail understanding at a regional decision scale. The importance of local research with local content is essential. Support from the department, specifically to local governments as mentioned throughout the strategic plan, is welcomed. However, the limitation or non- existent budget linked to it is what is lacking.

The focus on conservation and protection of our water resources, specifically in our major catchment areas, are

welcomed. Conservation as well as restoration and rehabilitation of degrades ecosystems like wetlands and estuaries is critical, but again the lack of transversal integrated responses and budgets linked to these plans often results in an inability to respond to grand scale pollution of our rivers and dams, or unintended consequences that could have a devastating and lasting negative economic impact on communities such as St Lucia.

That brings me to the proposed intention to increase protected areas managed by the state from 81% to 90%, which in itself is welcomed. However, the main custodian of protected areas of the state is Sanparks. A significant cut to Sanparks as well as Isimangaliso’s budgets however is a concern. The department’s expectation that infrastructure development and upgrades, especially in main Sanpark facilities, will increase growth income remains to be seen, particularly given the fact that tourism is the mainstream of income. Pre-COVID these facilities drew mainly overseas tourists based on their affordability. Again the government’s COVID response to tourism, especially local tourism, can hardly been seen as the saviour of the balance sheet of Sanparks.

As a resident of the Western Cape, I welcome the relocation of Ubuntu Wildlife Sanctuary to Mosselbay in the Western Cape, the number one best run local municipality in the country in a province focussing on transversal management. We further welcome the plan for 400 biodiversity entrepreneurs and 23 benefit sharing organisations or initiatives, as well as the sector jobs resilience plans in coal, agriculture, tourism, petrol based and metals sector. We will monitor the impact on job creation and will request regular feedback on these plans through the standing committee.

The Waste Management Plan by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research and the Department of Trade Industry and Competition to improve waste management and the ultimate goal of a circular economy is important. With the backdrop of previous corruption resulting in forensic reports in the Waste Burea, as well as widespread inability of financial management on local government level, the question begs to be asked if it is not time for ring-fenced conditional grants for integrated waste management to local governments, Minister. Hopefully the revision of the Forest Amendment Bill, eliciting lots of public participation, will result in a framework for increased sustainability.

Hon Chair, the legislative framework for this department is extensive and are most probably the least known by all citizens but will be noticed in our daily lives when not properly implemented or when not updated timeously. Most of the legislation has been through a process of review in the recent past or currently, except the Marine Living Resources Act. The unhappiness of various groups in the public such as small-scale fishers and people catching fish to have food on the table, is a direct consequence of a legal framework that creates caveats regarding policy and the impacts on people’s lives and livelihoods.

Hon Chair, I do hope that the Presidential Climate Change Co- ordination Commission as the Minister introduced and made a mention of in the beginning of her speech and of which the department will host the secretariat at the cost of

R33 million, will embrace the importance of a sustainable and resilient society creating a better life for us all.

Since it’s business as usual following in the footsteps of the Covid-19 Command Council Model where no oversight has been allowed, centralisation of power is more important than the Bill of Rights, initiatives to support our people financially during a crisis becomes a further opportunity for corruption

and enriching the politically connected few, will result not only in a failed government party, but a failed state and eventually a failed country. Quite the opposite of what the DA perceives as a better life for all, hon Chair. I thank you.

Mr I NTSUBE: Hon House Chair, the hon Minister, Deputy Minister, members of the Council, please allow me to start off with my speech of the budget policy debate by acknowledging that today is the important day in the history of the liberation struggle of the African continent. It was on this very same day, 58 years ago in 1963 when independent African states gathered in the capital city of Addis Ababa in Ethiopia to establish the Organisation of the African Unity, OAU, that today is known as the African Union, AU.

The ANC participated in that historic conference. In laying the cornerstone for a liberated continent, the founding fathers of the OAU had interest and well wishes of the African youth at heart. This was evidenced in 2006 when the AU adopted the African Youth Charter as a policy to prescribing responsibilities to members for the development of the youth. Article 13 and 19 of the Youth Charter draw interlinks between education, skills development, sustainable development and protection of the environment. In article 26, it states the

protection of the environment and conservation of nature as one of the main of the responsibilities faced by the African youth.

It is important to ensure that effective legislative framework to ensure that South Africa meets its climate change and environmental obligation under SADC, AU and United Nations’ various agencies and instruments. The strict adherence to carbon tax is necessary to ensure legal compliance. Hon House Chair, I am raising the matter of youth development in the context of this budget vote to illustrate that development has to be sustainable and sustainability can partly be achieved through the investment in young people and in the preservation and conservation of the environment and its natural resources.

Furthermore, the matter is raised as a statement that young people have a role to play in the protection and conservation of the environment and natural resources of this country, the continent and the world at large. Throughout the country in South Africa more and more young people are becoming aware of the importance of keeping a clean environment and environmental positive impact on the citizen’s health and wellbeing.

Section 24 of the South African Constitution provides a legislative framework to ensure that citizens of this country especially younger citizens are not exposed to the environment that is harmful and detrimental to their health and wellbeing. South Africa’s just transition to a climate resilient and lower carbon economy society is clearer stipulated on the White Paper on National Climate Response.

Hon members, climate change remains the reality of modern day and His Excellency President Ramaphosa in his state of the nation address in February of this year, having taken into account of the threat posed by the Covid-19 to our people and the economy, said that:

As we mobilise all of the resources at our disposal to support economic recovery, we cannot lose sight of the threat that climate change poses to our environmental health, socioeconomic development and economic growth.

This reaffirms government’s commitment as contained in the 2019 Election Manifesto of the ANC that South Africa should take forward her responsibilities in fight against climate change. In breathing action, a life into this commitment, government has published the nationally determined

contribution and this will boost climate change mitigation and adoption strategy.

It has become imperative of times to ensure the employ of effective climate change mitigation and adaptive strategy. Climate change has caused extreme weather conditions causing serious damage to property infrastructure, agriculture productivity and the loss of human lives. As previously indicated in this House by the Minister that the introduction of the Climate Change Bill aims to build the country’s effective climate change’s response and provides for a just transition for a climate resilient and lower carbon economy society within a framework of environmentally sustainable development.

Hon Chair, it is worth noting that Chapter 3 of the Climate Change Bill spells out the responsibilities of the provinces and municipalities in terms of climate change response.

Government has adopted national adaptation strategy which provides for an integrated and co-ordinated approach to managing adaptation measures to the impact of the climate change to all stakeholders including local communities.

It is the oversight interest of Parliament to see full implementation of the strategy in order to realise government’s commitment to climate change mitigation plan. Hon Chair, the quality of ... [Inaudible.] brief has a deliberate impact of our livelihood and the healthcare of citizens. One of the Medium-Term Strategy Framework outcomes is to realise

80 air quality monitoring stations reporting to South African air quality information system meeting data and recovery standard of 75% is expected that an increase in the number of air quality monitoring stations will effectively help realise our transition to low carbon energy.

House Chair, I stand on behalf of the ANC to support this Budget 32 of the Environment, Forestry and Fisheries for the financial year 2021-22. From the opening statement in the beginning it is evident that it is the collective responsibility of all citizens to protect and conserve the environment that we all live in. The younger generation cannot place entirely on the older generation and the poor can no longer blame the rich or vice versa. We must all take action and account.

To literally drive my point home hon House Chair, the collective progressive approach to social compacting through

district model was highly explained during the visit by the Deputy Minister Environment, Forestry and Fisheries hon Sotyu to the Free State province in April to gain first hand insight on infrastructure development on the Bethulie Dam facility and went on to see unveiling of about R12 million environmental education centre in Qwaqwa, Phuthaditjhaba.

Hon members, we have taken good notice of progress being made by the department in the waste management programme and the support being given in the form of skip bins to improve waste management services in the local municipalities. What remains of me now is to send my gratitude and opportunity to be given a responsibility by the ANC to participate in this debate.

Thank you very much.

Mr M P MOHALE (Free State MEC: Economic and Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs): Chairperson, hon members, let me also take this opportunity to wish all the Africans a happy Africa Day ... [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr A J Nyambi): Let’s hope you are not driving and you are getting directions from the Global Positioning System, GPS.

Mr M P MOHALE (Free State MEC: Economic and Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs): ... no Chair, it’s my phone I’m in the house.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr A J Nyambi): .... I know, that was just on a lighter note.

Mr M P MOHALE (Free State MEC: Economic and Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs) I know Chair. Every living organism relies on good water and good earth for survival. The health of the planet influences on our own personal health and well wellbeing as well as that of our families, communities, societies and economies. The interdependence of society, economy, environment and nature is the foundation of the concept of sustainable development around many pillars that constitutes our society.

Hon Chair, economic development, a growing population and increasing rates of urbanisation in South Africa have resulted in increased waste generation which undermine efforts in implementing effective waste management among our communities. A number of issues continue to be challenges for be effective waste management. Among the biggest contributors with the challenges are, but not limited to, ineffective data

collection systems and a lack of compliance, enforcement capacity, lack of education and awareness among stakeholders within the waste sector. Operational cost for management is one of them and the need to support waste reduction at the local level as well as availability of suitable land for waste disposal, lack of structured incentives for reduction, recycling or the reuse of waste.

We would like to reiterate our support to the hon Minister in in the department and further commit that we will always be a part to the support towards implementation of the National Waste Management Strategy. Which advocates to a large extent on the five key components of steps.

Firstly, relates to avoidance and reduction, which seeks to say products and materials must be designed in a manner that minimises their waste components. Secondly, as the reuse component is around that materials can be used for similar or different purposes without changing the form or properties.

Thirdly, the support seeks to reuse a product when it reaches its end or its useful life. Fourthly, the recycling which involve separating the raw material from the waste stream and processing them as products or raw materials. The recovery constitutes reclaiming particular components or materials or

using the waste as fuel as amongst others. Lastly, on the treatment and disposal, it refers to the process that is designed to minimise the environmental impact of waste by changing the physical properties of waste or separating out those that are destroying the components before the disposal.

To address some of these, we further welcome the initiative by the department which to a large extent seeks to integrates the co-operation between the local government, the provincial sphere in the process whereby job creation will also be prioritised. There are a number of programmes that are undertaken which at the end of the day have resulted to a number of jobs being created. We fully support the initiative as the Minister has outlined that this particular budget vote will continue to ensure that indeed waste is money.

We have noted that the conservation of biodiversity is getting increasingly important as the vastness of the earth’s natural environment continues to shrink due to modern developments and various land issues. We would like to also salute those landowners who have seen the importance of putting their land up for this purpose. We have seen a number of landowners particular in province of the Free State where the farmers

have availed their land to ensure that it is used for conservation purposes.

We are proud as the province of the Free State that more than 700 hectares of land has been put forward and it will soon be gazetted to ensure that such land is used for conservation particularly in the eastern part of the Free State. The grassland is not only essential for food production, they are also critical for the water production through what is called filtration, and for carbon sequestration which will ultimately be critical in our fight against climate change.

Wetlands are commonly associated with valleys floors and are mostly recognised by dense stands of reeds, sedges and other aquatic plants, though not all of these characteristics are not typical for all wetlands. Nonetheless, collectively, all of these different wetlands types provide a consistent and clean supply of water at no charge to society.

The services provided by wetlands, however, extends beyond providing water, and includes other benefits such as providing an environmental that supports a range of economic activities such as tourism. The Seekoei-vlei Nature Reserve in the Free State is also an example of such which provides materials such

as fish that can be harvested, sold or consumed to support livelihoods.

Managing wetlands has proven to be challenging and requires basic knowledge of where they are in the landscape and where other landscape features are relative to the wetlands. We have also taken a lead in this regard and we have developed a new and innovative approach for mapping wetlands not previously used in South Africa. The hope is that this new mapping approach, which has also been adopted by the South African National Biodiversity Institute, for improving the National Wetland Inventory will provide new and better information to support improved wetlands management particularly in the Free State. We further welcome the good support that we are receiving from the national department in this regard.

Hon Chair, we would like to indicate that we fully support the efforts of the national department as the Minister has indicated on the fight against environmental crimes. The province of the Free State is one of those that has seen a drastical decline around all of these crimes. Throughout the years, as a province, we have recorded the lowest of the only nine incidents in the past reporting year, as opposed to the previous years and all the other areas around the rhino

poaching**.** We would like to attribute this to the visibility and the increased activities by our Environmental Management Inspectors, EMIs.

About diversity economy, we would like to further support the strategic partnerships that we have seen between the department as well as the private sector. Particularly, on one of those programmes like the Black Game Ranchers, where we have seen a number of black people being supported through the donation of the strategic species.

To this end, the Free State has taken que where have seen towards the end of the last financial years, where we have passed a Special Appropriation Bill where 40 Black Game Ranchers, which included the young people especially women where they were assisted or donated with the game in order to ensure that black people are not just spectators but they participate meaningfully in that particular space which has always been dominated by others but black people were not being part.

We further want to appreciate one of the strategic partnerships between the department and the province of the Free State on issues of Aqua culture. Even though in the

province of the Free State the programme is still being co- ordinated at the agriculture and rural development, the Gariep Fishery Project which is located just outside the Gariep dam in the Free State province is one of those examples where the strategic relationships are bearing fruits because a number of jobs are already created and we still anticipate that with that particular strategic partnership led by the department under the leadership of the hon Deputy Minister, that that project becomes a success. We further want to support and appreciate that particular initiative.

Under protected areas, we welcome the strategy as announced by the hon Minister around the protected areas. And the Free State province has taken a decision that as part of our responsive COVID-19, in order to navigate the balance between livelihood and life, was to identify all of these protected areas particularly the resort which were previously used for other purposes to be used for eco-tourism purposes.

We have further undertaken many initiatives to identify some of these resorts. One of them Sandveld Nature Reserves, which is very popular with nature enthusiasts as well as routine tourist activities. Part of the benefits that we would derive out of that is that we would be able not to use the resort as

a recreational activity but to also change the mindset of society that they need to connect with nature.

For that end, the of the Free State province in responding to the strategy around the protected areas as announced by the hon Minister has taken a decision to use all these strategic reserves to make them accessible to the people at no cost. And to further intertwine with a number of activities which are appealing to society particularly, the young people. Because we need to bridge the gap between the attitudes of society whereby the protected areas are only thought as the areas which would only appeal to a certain site of the society.

We need to bring young people particular the learners to be close to nature. We would have programmes which would start very soon where they would spend quite a number of time particularly over the weekends in our reserves to really interact with all the natural species, for their benefit and understanding as they have not had that opportunity in the past. And the nature of their economic status does not allow them to be able to have those expensive resources to can spend the time in them.

As the Free State province, we welcome the vote as delivered by the hon Minister. We also would like to say as the Free State province, we fully support the Budget Vote as delivered. Because it speaks towards the ruling party’s commitment to transformation and environmental conservation in its manifesto as well as the resolutions of the governing party taken in Nasrec. That we need to use all the components of the environment for the betterment of the lives of our people. I thank you.

Mr A ARNOLDS: Chairperson, this is an urgent call to you to end the corruption in your department and entities under your management. The country is bleeding of corruption and the poor are suffering under your government. Under your watch in a single year, irregular expenditure jumped from R342 million to

R2,9 billion due to inadequate monitoring of compliance with

supply chain management laws and regulations. Taxpayers money under your watch, Minister, is not spent in a responsible

manner, fruitless expenditure relates to pre-payments made to implementing agents, vendors and suppliers, for goods and

services that were not in line with the contractual arrangements and agreed deliverables, cancellation of travel or no-show accommodation, payment of interest and penalties, payment to VAT charged by non-VAT vendors, damaged stock,

misuse of vehicles and overpayment to suppliers continues as usual.

Supply chain management irregularities also includes procurement without inviting competitive bids. This is a common trend in the environmental portfolio.

Eskom and Sasol is still the two of the biggest polluters in the country. Under your management communities staying in and around forests and natural resources are not benefitting at all. Small-scale fishers that are in need of environmental justice are not enjoying the benefits of South Africa’s resources. Instead, you had to approach the High Court to scrap the flawed process followed in awarding small-scale fishing rights in the Western Cape. Your department is not in touch with the conditions that small-scale fishers find themselves in.

Part of the mandate of this department is to ensure the protection of the environment for future generations to enjoy. Residents of Wentworth in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal province that were affected by the explosion at the Engen refinery in December last year are still aggrieved by the lack of urgency in addressing the aftermath of the explosion. Residents were

left traumatised and hundreds of homes damaged, the health and safety concerns of this community needs urgent attention.

Minister, it seems that the only time it’s a crime to contravene environmental laws is when the offenders are poor indigenous black people as in the case of the members of the Hobeni Community in the Eastern Cape province who were found guilty of fishing in the Marine Protected Area, adjacent to the Dwesa-Cwebe Nature Reserve. Thankfully, the Appeal Court eventually upheld their appeal against the sentence and conviction. This is what communities must go through in order to exercise their customary rights.

Chairperson, forestry products contribute at least 4,5% to total manufacturing placing it among the top five sectors in manufacturing. In less than 10 years, export earnings have almost trebled, with the sector providing a positive trade balance of close to R10 billion. Much of forestry operations are rurally based, making it a significant contributor to rural economies supporting close to 700 000 livelihoods.

As the EFF, we are also raise our concern over the almost R380 million for tenders awarded to preferential bidders, created especially for these tenderpreneurs. At least 87% of

irregular expenditure in your department relates to inadequate internal controls designed and implemented. In addition, fraud and misconduct amounts to more than R1,5 billion worth of allocations.

Minister, your failure to oversee the resources of South Africa with effectiveness and responsible will go down in the history books of the country. As the EFF, we are not supporting the Budget Vote 32: Environment, Forestry and Fisheries. Thank you.

Mr T A MOKONE (Limpopo – MEC: LEDET): Hon House Chair, the members of the NCOP, Deputy Minister, Sotyu, hon Fikile Xasa and committee members, members of executive council, MECs, from various provinces, ladies and gentlemen, we want to take this opportunity to thank you for allowing us to address you today as we come together to deliberate and support works by the hon Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, Ms Barbara Creecy. As the Limpopo province, we support the Minister for her leadership in delivering on the promises for environmental jointly with provinces We want to the Minister, indeed ...

*Xitsonga*:

I ndlopfu ya hina.

*English*:

Which simply means that we have to work together if we want to succeed in what we are doing. The Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries is mandated with the task ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr A J Nyambi): ... hon Mokone,

Mr T A MOKONE (Limpopo – MEC: LEDET): Yes.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr A J Nyambi): The hat can only be allowed if it is cultural or it has to do with your religion but if it is your style it can’t be allowed in the House. [Laughter.] You can continue.

Mr T A MOKONE (Limpopo – MEC: LEDET): Uh, sorry for that. The Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries is mandated with the task of guiding South Africa to respond to climate change and it has commissioned the development of national adaptation strategy for South Africa. The strategy will give effect to the implementation of the national climate change response policy, 2011, which provides South Africa’ vision for an effective climate change response.

In support of the national initiative, Limpopo province hosted a consultation session on South Africa’s draft updated national determined contribution under the Paris agreement.

This consultative process, is being undertaken to solicit input from the various role players within the province. Our contribution as a province will go a long way in saving climate change response action as well as much needed support in future for the benefit of our people and the environment.

Our efforts towards climate change adaptation and mitigation include the following: Climate smart agriculture, food security and livelihoods programme, the Fetsa Tlala – a food production support programme implemented by the Department of Agriculture, land Reform and Rural Development. These programmes aims to combat food insecurity as well as various communities’ adaptation projects facilitated by Choice Trust in Mopane District. Clean energy and green transport programme, the renewable energy; that is biogas and solar energy in Sekhukhune District Municipality as well as integrated rapid public transport known as “Leeto la Polokwane”.

We are working with German society for international co- operation towards the development of climate change and the

indigenous systems assessment and need analysis report which will form part of the national adaptation strategy for the country. On 13 May 2021, we commenced with consultations with traditional leaders and healers throughout the province. This programme will run until 01 June 2021. As the Limpopo province we welcome the high level panel board that was tabled by the Minister in the public domain three weeks ago relating to management, breeding, hunting, training and handling of; Elephant, lions, Leopards and Rhinoceros.

The province welcome and support the engagement initiated by the Minister with private rhino owners recently. Critical of any conversation of rhino, is the minimisation of long term conservation to the species. This will inculcate conservation status and sustainable utilisation of resources within the sector. Communities that are living next to protected areas must be assisted to utilise natural resources for their sustainability and livelihood. We support the department’s initiative where communities that are living next to the Kruger National Park benefit from these resources. The province has 47 nature reserves, in support of this, we have commenced with the commercialisation of these reserves.

Evaluation is underway for three commercialisation projects

that were advertised and additional four to be advertised before the end of June 2021.

We have a responsibility as government to ensure that communities benefit from these rich natural resources on their doorstep. We have signed a common movement agreement ... [Inaudible.] ... community bordering protected areas. This process facilitated and encouraged good relationships between the management authorities and the neighbouring communities.

This type of partnership did not only create platform for the much needed jobs but also provided tangible and social benefit for communities residing adjacent protected areas.

Hon Chair, the province also welcomes and supports the rollout of the presidential economic stimulus programme such as the municipal cleaning and greening programme as the people and parks youth programmes that are aimed at ensuring that much implemented the waste relief funding programme from which 48 beneficiaries have been paid R4,5 million. We thank the Minister for allocating R82 million for phase 2 of the presidential stimulus package for worst economic projects. We applaud the Minister for a consistent leadership in co- ordinating Ministers and Members of Executive Council, MINMEC, to champion the issues pertaining to the environment. The

province in pursuance of the same goal, is also convening Member of Mayoral Committee, MMC, forum. This will go a long way in collective decision making.

In conclusion, hon Chair, we would like to commend the Minister for her stewardship in delivering our priorities for the environment sector jointly with provinces.

*IsiZulu*:

Malibongwe igama lamakhosikazi.

*English*:

Thank you very much.

Mr M A P DE BRUYN: Thank you, Chairperson and hon members, South Africa is a country that is dependent on its natural resources, agricultural land and water resources. These resources contribute millions to the economy and the results would be devastating if we should ever lose one of these resources. Unfortunately, we are well on our way to destroy our fresh water supplies and forest areas with the constant pollution from our municipalities.

In the Mangaung metro for example, a mainline was leaking hundreds of thousands of litres of raw sewage into the Bloemspruit, which eventually ended up in the Modder River and the Krugersdriff dam. Hundreds of farmers are dependent on these rivers and dams for agricultural purposes and the result of the pollution are less than favourable.

What is even more worrying is the fact that this mainline was leaking raw sewage into the Bloemspruit River since 2013 and it has only been attended to a couple of weeks ago.

To ensure a sustainable environment for future generations, these types of pollution and many others must be eliminated and procedures must be put in place to prevent further pollution in the future.

Climate change is also unfortunately a reality and extensive research is needed to prepare ourselves for the changes in the future. Farmers should be informed and trained to anticipate what’s to come in the future regarding climate change, if we wish to have food security for future generations.

Furthermore, research must be intensified to determine the impact of climate change on our oceans, because the fishing

industry contributes billions to the economy and provides thousands of job opportunities.

*Afrikaans*:

Ongelukkig kos al die goed geld. Studies, navorsing en infrastruktuur is duur en dis skokkend om te dink dat die regering bereid is om die begroting met sowat 22% te sny. Veral as gekyk word na instansies soos die groen skerpioene wat totaal onderbefonds is en nie in staat is om effektiewelik hul pligte te vervul nie. Landbou bosbou en visserye is die hartklop van die land en is ’n brose deel van ons samelewing wat opgepas moet word vir toekomstige generasies. Nie net vir voedselsekerheid nie, maar ook vir werksgeleenthede en die behoud van ons ekonomie.

Die R7 miljard wat vir die departement beskikbaar is is ’n druppel in die emmer van wat nodig is, maar dis darem ’n begin. As kaderontplooiing en korrupsie uitgewis kan word sal daar miljarde rande ekstra beskikbaar wees om hierdie kardinaal belangrike begrotings voldoende te befonds

*English*:

The decrease in funding for this department will have severe consequences in ensuring a sustainable environment for

agriculture, forestry’s and fisheries, and will not serve in the best interest of our people or the sustainability of a healthy environment for the future. Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE

ENVIRONMENT: Chairperson of the House, hon Minister Barbara Creecy, hon chairperson of the select committee, hon Tebogo Modise, hon members of the NCOP, MECs and all delegates, South Africa has one of the most magnificent environments in the world. Due to our rich variety of plants and animals, our country is ranked in the top three most biodiverse on earth.

This places on us as lawmakers, business, civil society and citizens an enormous responsibility to ensure that all of us work together, to ensure our natural environment is protected, and that we are all able to live in harmony with nature.

This means that the sustainable use of our natural resources in the development of our economy, and the upliftment of the lives of our people, should not destroy the environment we live in.

Land is the foundation of all life on earth and an engine of economic growth. We can feed more people if we treat our soils

with care and prevent land degradation. We recognise the role played by our trees in our environment and their contribution to the greening of our country.

As part of the government Greening Programme, the President has directed our department to co-ordinate and facilitate the planting of two million trees annually, for the next five years. This makes our five-year target to be 10 million trees.

The trees to be planted over this period will include those that provide shade and fruit, and those that will green human settlements and assist in rehabilitating degraded areas.

Planting trees and cleaning of the communities will be intertwined. The sourcing of trees from community-based nurseries and small and medium enterprises will stimulate local economic development.

We believe that the planting of these two million trees annually, would need us to look at this initiative in a broader context of greening that is aimed at also addressing issues of climate change, beautification of our surroundings and rehabilitation of degraded areas, amongst others.

To ensure that two million trees are planted annually, commencing this financial year, the department will explore partnerships with NGOs, corporates, municipalities, sector departments, and other public entities involved in the function of greening.

The Department of Human Settlement and municipalities are at the centre of the plan, as they will have plans in terms of which areas will be getting new housing settlements. The department will be refurbishing four of its own nurseries this financial year, to meet the demand of the greening programme. The nurseries are: Wolsely – Western Cape, Bloemhof – North West, Rusplaas – Limpopo, QwaQwa – Free State. The refurbishment of the nurseries will increase production and employment for the local communities.

The Forestry Masterplan is a formal implementation plan that has been endorsed by Labour, Industry and government, to ensure for creation and sustainability of decent employment, long-term investment, and the transfer of skills and expertise to the next generation.

With the forestry industry on board, the Masterplan will ensure that forestry becomes a transformed industry and

represents all sectors of society. The department has identified three plantations, namely Ramputas in Limpopo, Lehanna and Makoba in the Eastern Cape, to be transferred to the local communities in this financial year.

This is towards achieving focus area 2, which is the transformation of the sector. This is but one example of how the Masterplan will be implemented.

As we adapt to, and mitigate, the effects of climate change, we will be working closely with entities such as the South African Weather Service, Saws, to ensure infrastructure meets the needs of communities and that the increase in extreme weather events does not cause loss of life.

To secure our food, avoid flood and drought damage and the health of present and future generations, we need to make sure that we meet the constitutional right of all South Africans, to an environment that is not harmful to their health and wellbeing.

The one area we need to scale up is the levels of public awareness about climate change and how various communities could ready themselves to deal with it. We need to make sure

that early warning information reaches affected communities timeously. In spite of the limited resources, we have ensured that repairs and maintenance of SAWS equipment is not compromised so that we can continue to provide the requisite services.

In order to constantly improve this service to the general public, Saws has recently introduced a new early warning service, called an impact-based severe weather warning service, to provide early warning information to affected communities timeously.

To address climate change, the department and partners have implemented a number of interventions at municipal level. I will mention some examples.

Firstly, in the Overberg and Amatole districts, a project to support building climate resilience of coastal communities, ecosystems and small-scale fishers is being implemented by WWF-South Africa. In this project, aquaculture farming is being supported, and a mobile APP has been developed that serves as an early-warning system for small-scale fishers in the selected areas.

Secondly, in the Vhembe district, Women for Climate Justice South Africa is implementing a project to build climate resilience and reduce vulnerability of smallholder mango farmers in Hebron and Mutale, and surrounding communities. Climate-smart methods of mango farming are being practised and training provided to communities. The project is looking at alternative sources of livelihoods, diversifying away from the vulnerable mango farming sector.

It is of no use to always boast that Africa has a wealth in biodiversity and wildlife, when in the reality, the majority of Black Africans continue to be deprived from being game farmers and landowners. Our Department’s Biodiversity Economy Programme and South Africa’s Transfrontier Conservation Areas seek to empower communities, so they can manage their own ecotourism projects within the cross-border environments.

South Africa’s protected areas are not only important for biodiversity conservation, but also for ecotourism and the development of the rural economy.

We want ecological sustainability and resilience to climate change, while safeguarding more than 418 000 biodiversity- based jobs.

As we recover from the severe impacts of this pandemic, we must not only address the short-term economic pain it has caused our economy, but we must take the opportunity to ensure a more sustainable, just, and equitable society.

Our recovery must improve the environment upon which our livelihood and wellbeing depend and must also tackle climate change and ensure social equity. The big investments in infrastructure must be measured against these values.

Through the EPWP programmes, SANParks will create over 23 000 full-time equivalent, FTE, opportunities, 29 000 jobs for youth, 24 000 for women and 1 000 for people with disabilities. More than 2 000 SMMEs will be contracted to perform a variety of services.

This will allow SANParks to establish the basis of the national park and enable placement of staff and other resources in the region to be able to expand and support the national park without incurring the potentially prohibitive costs associated with the operational management of a larger area.

The protection of our environment is of the utmost importance. This is an area that holds enormous wealth in terms of jobs and economic development with millions of people relying on nature for their livelihoods.

Support will also be given to develop capacity and environmental education strategies to improve the competency of municipal personnel and improve environmental performance, as alluded to by the chairperson and by a Member of Parliament from the Frees State.

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment annually participates in the Integrated Development Plan, IDP, analysis sessions to assess the environmental sector governance in all 278 municipal IDPs across the country.

South Africa is a water-stressed country, but is also a country that boast almost 300 estuaries. Provinces will soon become the responsible management authorities for these important water bodies, which means you will have the responsibility of developing and implementing estuarine management plans for the estuaries within your jurisdictions.

While the department has a legal mandate to manage six estuaries, the rest fall within the mandate of the provinces. Provinces are therefore urged to enter into agreements with willing municipalities to take over the functions of the many estuaries within the provinces.

At local level, you are best placed to effectively manage the estuaries. Among the plans that have already been developed, a number of challenges stand out and will require commitment and dedication and strong co-ordination of all activities to be successfully addressed.

In conclusion, we would do well to work together to address all the challenges that face us as we adapt to, and mitigate, climate change, as we create a nature-based economy from which all our people can benefit, without harming the environment.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the hon Minister for her leadership during this year. I have worked with many Ministers in my career ... [Inaudible.] … but is must say that you are one of the best. I know it is always difficult being a woman led by another woman because of challenges that we as women sometimes get ourselves in, but I must say that you have been one the best in this sector.

To Team A, which is my ...

*Sesotho:*

... bomme le bontate, ke a le leboha banana …

*English:*

... you are one of the best. I thank you.

Mr X NGWEZI: Hon Chairperson, and greetings to all hon members, MECs and Minister, the right to an environment as envisaged in section 24 of the Bill of Rights in our Constitution compels government to guarantee our right to not only a healthy environment, but also to each and every individual. The responsibility for safeguarding the environment must also be shared amongst all South African citizens as stakeholders. If government is not up to the task, then as a people with a common vested interest we must hold them to account over any and all shortcomings in terms of environmental government.

However, it is at local and provincial government levels in particular that the sustained use of our environment is best managed. Human resources in this field must therefore be rapidly developed within traditional structures, local

government and provincial legislatures. Each province has access to unique resources that can be responsibly tapped into for economic stimulation whilst simultaneously ensuring long- term sustainability. What is meant by this is that for example, wildlife can be used for educational and tourists’ benefits without impacting the sustainability or threatening its extinction. There are various roles to be played in protecting our environment and wildlife. The call to be consciously aware of the impact we have of our environment will find us smarter in the way we make use of single use plastic pollution in our environment, including our rich marine environment remains one of the most concerning and detrimental polluted.

In South Africa, we have had traditional methods of producing many items that can be used for our daily consumption such as the making wood and cutlery, which is both beneficial to our rural and larger economies as well as non-harmful and biodegradable. The IFP sounds the call for single use plastics which should be immediately banned.

Hon Minister, we urgently call on you to put together a task team and address the sewage issue that has been flowing into the Klip River near the Zakheni area. This poses an immediate

threat to the people who stay in that area as they use it to cook and drink. Clean water is our human right, it is not a right that looks forward to, to forfeit. Hon Minister, this is an appeal on behalf of all the people of this nation for you to work closely with the Department of Water and Sanitation to ensure that you achieve a target seizing all instances where water is polluted, particularly rivers, dams and streams where people rely on these precious resources. With that said, the IFP supports the department’s budget. Thank you.

Mr C F B SMIT: Hon House Chair, firstly I want to suggest that MEC Mokone gets out of his cosy chair in his air-conditioned office and get himself on the ground and visit the villages of Phola Park, Parkmore, Ga-Monama or Michelle and Sekgakgapeng in Mogalakwena whose people must breathe in the vulgar smell of faeces flowing down the Dorps River into the Mogalakwena Nylsvlei water system.

I also want to say to the chair of the portfolio committee – she said that municipalities should be brought on board. Well, I am asking, which municipalities, because they have all fallen apart because of the ANC corruption. We have a country littered with environmental disasters occurring every single day. One of the biggest contributors to this pollution are

local municipalities that are falling apart due to maladministration, fraud, corruption and the incapacity due to cadre deployment.

These municipalities were looted to the bone by greedy ANC cadres who have no shame at all. The municipalities failed to keep up with the demand to deal with sewer and refuse issues and their systems are overloaded. As the ANC government just don’t get the principle of future planning, investment and basic maintenance. Everything is mostly about fat tenders and what cut is mine. Sewer are flowing freely into our river systems and in some cases, are even deliberately pumped into rivers, dams and the ocean. [Interjections.] Hon Chairperson, may I be protected.

Minister, we need you and your department to be our watchdog to ensure that our environment is looked after and protected. We need you to ensure that there is the necessary capacity to deal with the policing and inspecting to ensure environmental compliance that there is the necessary capacity to investigate charge and prosecute offenders. We need you to fight for our environment, Minister.

It is a serious problem to keep someone accountable for environmental crimes, when local municipalities are the offenders. Because accounting officers are changed like underwear in municipalities. Just as a case gets up to speed, you will find the charge accounting officer is no longer employed and the process has to start from scratch again. A case never sees a day in court.

We urge you to look into this and make the necessary proposals for change in legislation to improve accountability. I know Minister that you are going to tell us you don’t have the budget because you have unfunded mandates and so does municipalities. This is because your department gets the back end of the tail when it comes to the budget. Well, Minister, this is totally unacceptable and just shows how reckless, irresponsible and short-sighted this ANC government really is.

Our health system can barely cope with a pandemic. Do we really want to subject it to the scenario where we have no fresher water systems which will result in our health system being overloaded with cases of cholera and other waterborne diseases? As I said, Minister, we need you to fight for our environment. I trust that you will be responsible and oppose any attempt to expand or invest in any further nuclear power

generation and will rather advocate for sustainable green alternatives. You and your government have an obligation to keep with the Paris Agreement, although we are at this stage so far off target due to the ANC’s government inability to move beyond coal generated power.

Minister, I raised a matter with you a while ago about the red-tape and unnecessary duplication of processes relating to the trade and transport of wildlife across provincial borders, even within a single province border. Wildlife farmers are struggling to get the necessary permits to trade and transport their wildlife because each province has its own process and they do not communicate with each other.

We definitely have the technology that can be applied to make this process more efficient, easier, faster and more cost- effective to co-ordinate between provinces while still applying stricter regulations on wildlife movement to protect our ecosystems. Will you commit to investigate and initiate such a system in near future. Fresh water aquaculture has great opportunity for development and large scale job creation in South Africa. As fish can be a cheap and healthy alternative food source for ordinary South Africans, and more specifically poor South Africans. Fir this to be a reality,

your department will have to revisit some legislation to make it more accessible, easier and more cost-effective for small and medium farming enterprises to invest.

Currently, legislation is a serious hurdle and constrained on fish farming growth. The farming of tilapia and cat fish is an enclosed and isolated systems and should be easier, faster and cheaper to get approval for. This will create lots of job opportunities improved food security and will reduce the strain on our natural ecosystems due to illegal net and track fishing practices, which is what your department should be striving to achieve, Minister.

The DA believes in a sustainable environment and our commitment to green economy, as we are already implementing this policy where we govern. We are also committed to the optimum and sustainable use of our scarce natural resources to ensure that future generations can also experience and pick the fruits of the beauty of our beloved country and all its natural jewels. The only government that is committed to a green economy is a DA government. Where we govern, we get things done. This is the time for change now – the DA difference. Thank you.

Mr A VAN DER WESTHUIZEN (Western Cape Chairperson: Standing Committee on Agriculture, Environmental Affairs and Development Planning): Hon Chair, the work of the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries is of utmost importance to the Western Cape. In the case of Budget Vote 32, we see a net decrease of 12,3% in the annual budget. This at the time when the pressures on the environment and therefore for the need for the stricter enforcement of the environment regulations are mounting. Today, I want to touch on four aspects important to the Western Cape. Those being, alien vegetation, those who used to work in our state plantations, San Parks and management of our marine resources.

The Western Cape as an international recognised and sensitised biodiversity, our flower kingdom maybe the smallest kingdom but we have the largest variety of our plant species. What even makes it more special is that almost 70% of its 9 000 plant species are found nowhere else on earth. The conservation of the natural vegetation within the Cape Flower Kingdom is therefore of international conservation significance.

We unfortunately have a huge problem with alien vegetation that is threatening many of our fynbos areas. It is also

affecting our water supplies. It has been calculated that the most cost effective way of sustainable and maximising the runoff to our dams, is to clear our mountains of alien vegetation. Serious questions were and are still being asked, particularly after the recent fire on Table Mountain, about the few load of aliens which aggravate the intensity and thereby the damage caused by veld fires.

The Western Cape Provincial Government, municipalities and private land owners are spending millions on alien clearing. Pines which spat from state plantations onto our mountains slopes represent us wild species that is causing severe headaches. I therefore think, it is only fair to expect increased support from this department for our fight against alien vegetation,

There is a far more serious issue, and that is the plight of those that used to work in the former state plantations. House Chair, let me put it bluntly, this department then called Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, DWAF, has turned its back against its former employees in the Western Cape. The residents of *borsdorpe* such as La Motte, De Balle, Haweqwa, Kransbos, Meerlust and Nuweberg to name but a few, suddenly found themselves without jobs when these state plantations

were leased to Mountains to Oceans Forestry, MTO. Today they are still staying in wooden houses and infrastructure without maintenance on land technical registered in the name of the Department of Public and Infrastructure. We all know how that department has been mismanaged.

The same lack of formal supervision formerly undertaken by plantation managers led to a state of neglect. There has been economic empowerment of workers in terms of ownership as it was envisaged in Employees Share Ownership Programmes that has never been put in place. The frustration levels amongst these former state employees are running high.

House Chair, I therefore call on government to no longer turn its back against these people. Where these *borsdorpe* are not too far from existing towns and where municipal services can be provided, financial support should be given for the upgrading of their houses and infrastructure. Properties need to be subdivided and municipalities supported to take up the upgraded infrastructure. Where these *borsdorpre* are too far from amenities, or proper municipal services cannot be provided, these formal workers should be assisted in moving them to suitable housing schemes in neighbouring towns. Most importantly, they should be assisted with training for jobs.

The situation is remarkably similar to the one of those who are left behind when a mine closes. In those case, government support is available through investments, training and the establishment of small enterprises. If that can be done for mineworkers, why can’t it be done for former state employees?

I listened with great attention to the Minister’s intended review to address the fragmented management of parks. SA National Parks, SANParks is managing large well known nature reserves in the Western Cape. Many are not only highly important landmarks, such as the Cape Point and Table Mountain reserves, but also thy of internationally from a biodiversity perspective. The management of these reserves brings with them huge responsibilities. Unfortunately, SANParks failed dismally to ensure the safety of visitors to for example Table Mountain. We have seen visitors being murdered for their cellphones on Table Mountain.

The image of South Africa’s as dangerous tourist destination is strengthened by these incidents. It is unacceptable that people are allowed to set up illegal structures and light fires for cooking and heating on Table Mountain. The mess that was caused by the recent fires on Table Mountain will really serve as an inspiration to relook your budget allocation and

to act decisively to improve the safety of visitors to the mountain.

The Western Cape Coastline accounts for about 85% of all fishing activities in South Africa. Many coastal communities know little else in the form of jobs than those linked to fishing. While I appreciate the Minister approaching courts to set aside their own department’s decisions in the allocation of fishing quotas, the delays in the fishing rights process has had a devastating impact on these communities. Just last week, two individuals with almost R24 000 dried abalone were arrested. The wild stocks of abalone have been almost designated, despite the best efforts of law enforcement agencies. The task of patrolling our coastline is enormous.

I call on the department to consider a completely new approach and the regulations regarding abalone. The commercial abalone farms are highly effective to fertilise abalone, and have offered to make available to your department excess abalone lobby and small abalone. The proposal is that; this be sold in suitably rocky areas of our coastline. This has been done for years in Japan and New Zealand. Commercial abalone farms also propose that; the local communities must then be handed the

right to farm legally with abalone on these allocated stretches of our coastline.

Minister, your department contemplated such an initiative at one stage, but the application process, conditions and forms were so challenging that the communities that need to gain from this were not able to properly organise themselves and apply for these opportunities in time. Won’t you please consider the practical implications of this, for the next round of course. We clearly need a new approach whereby coastal communities some of them that were living on fish, abalone, crayfish etc. for hundreds of years can again access the opportunities that the marine life was offering them on their doorsteps.

House Chair, in closing, we all know that the economy needs a restart. We all know that we should make the most of our natural resources particularly those that can contribute to sustainable economic growth. I therefore call on the Minister to ensure that this budget is managed, to ensure a sustainable environment that will continue to long-term economic growth. I thank you.

Mr A Van Der WESTHUIZEN (Western Cape – Chairperson: Standing Committee on Agriculture, Environmental Affairs and Development Planning)

Mr G M MVOKO (Eastern Cape MEC: Finance, Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism): Thank you very much, hon House Chair, Minister Barbara Creecy, Deputy Minister, hon members, senior government officials and ladies and gentleman, good day, let me first appreciate the time I have been given to make a contribution in today’s proceedings. We do this at the time when we are celebrating Africa Day as a continent.

Our duty as a nation is to ensure by action that we participate in transformation of Africa into the global powerhouse of the future, as part of our African Agenda.

As we observe this day, let us deepen our efforts to achieve a sustainable and lasting social and economic recovery for the citizens of Africa. The African Continental Free Trade Area, AfCFTA, would play a key role in boosting aid in Africa and ensure the broadening of economic activities.

Hon House Chair, we are delighted that the long awaited Climate Change Bill will be tabled towards the end of the year by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment. We

should enable all spheres of government to plan, allocate budget and implement adaptation and mitigation measures in line with the national determined contribution and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. All spheres of government will have to ensure that there is a dedicated budget allocated for the implementation of the provincial metros and district climate change response strategies when we are planning 2022-23 financial year. The provinces will be expected to establish a Premier Climate Change Commission that will report to the newly established Presidential Climate Change Commission. This government structure will assess if we are implementing and reporting accordingly.

Hon House Chair, the Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism in the province is participating in the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries e-led initiative that is focusing on cleaning and greening programme infrastructure and protected areas. The programme will create 60 work opportunities in each local municipality that is participating in the Eastern Cape and 120 work opportunities in each metro. Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency will benefit as well as it was confirmed that their submission will be funded.

The province will be gazetting recycling strategy to support recycling initiatives, identified construction and demolition waste as an opportunity that will have to be funded and supported to create jobs. We, as the provincial government will create 970 jobs across seven municipalities by implementing environment Expanded Public Works Programme, EPWP projects that will focus on waste management and eradication of alien and evasive plants. This will contribute to building climate change resilience, ecosystem rehabilitation and biodiversity conservation.

As a department, we also participate in the Operation Phakisa initiative and joint operations in the province targeting illegal development, illegal sand mining activities, rhino poaching, cycad smuggling and abalone poaching by organised environmental syndicates. It did it, Chair, in the Eastern Cape environmental group composed of the Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Department of Minerals and Energy, Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment and the Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency, ECPTA, as well as private rhino owners, Director of Public Prosecutions, DPP, offices, Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation or hawks, SA National Parks, Sanparks and Department of Water and Sanitation; and this

governance structure discuss, Chair, and advise on how the environmental legislation and crime cases dockets should be compiled and cases be attended to. These are all intended measures to ensure effective and adequate utilisation of our land, natural resources and the beloved environment towards sustaining our economic prosperity as a country. These are significant endowments which we must always and tirelessly demonstrate our sense of responsibility towards them, not as mere courtesy but fundamental principles as enshrined in the Constitution. We support the budget. I thank you, House Chair.

Mr T B MATIBE: Thank you very much, House Chairperson, hon Minister and Deputy Minister, members, special delegates and fellow South Africans, hon members, we rise on behalf of the ANC to support Budget Vote 32 and we have some few reasons that we will put forward as to why we support this Budget Vote.

Just before I do that, I would like to correct some misinformation that were put forward by hon members. The first one is on the irregular expenditure. We must indicate and appreciate the work that the department is doing in terms of reducing irregular expenditure and the downward trend that it has shown. Hon Minister, we really appreciate the work that

you are doing in that regard. That can also be seen by the improved audit opinion as put forward by the Auditor-General. It is a clear indication that the Minister and her department are at work.

Hon de Bruyn and hon Smit on cadre deployment, let’s start here, deployment happened even during apartheid but unfortunately, because the people who were deployed then were not cadres, that is why you could not call it cadre deployment. You can call it cadre deployment ... thanks to the ANC that you are able to understand what cadres are. We can trace it back as far as the Hertzog regime when there were poor white policies. They were deploying poor whites and not even caring about whether they were qualified or not, because they were white. It is just that deployment by then was racially based, unlike this one where we deploy in terms of capacity.

The people of South Africa are very ... [Inaudible.] ... in terms of what they want is shown by the by-elections that have just happened now. That is why we were able to wallop ... [Laughter.] ... the opposition in the by-elections because they see the work that we are doing as the ANC.

Hon Minister, we really wish to welcome and commend the work that you doing in putting South Africa into a new trajectory of sustainability and economic development. The role your department is playing through your three Phakisa programmes – biodiversity economy, ocean economy and ... is welcome relief for rural economies especially managed by traditional authorities; where we come from. The thousands of job you are already creating in the sector and expected new jobs in the horizon would really assist the jobless youth to address youth unemployment, employment of women, as well as people with disabilities will get a much-needed boost.

What is most important, hon Minister, is your initiative to industrialize and localize value chains of our indigenous biological resources. We also want to commend your department for ... [Inaudible.] ... it is one of the leading departments advocating for climate change ... [Inaudible.] ... and mitigation. We believe that with these resources at our disposal in our ... [Inaudible.] ... can also in the near future produce proudly South African vaccines, food supplements and other cosmetics that will be able to assist our people and create much-needed jobs.

On ocean and cost, hon House Chairperson, the Vote will see the repair of five estuaries as well as the implementation of estuary management plans for Buffalo City, Durban bay, Richards Bay and in the Orange river. It has been reported by Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, CSIR, a number of South African estuaries contribute almost R4 billion to the gross national income and that will also create employment opportunities.

SA National Biodiversity Institute, SANBI, is one of the entities of the department established in terms of the National Environment Management Biodiversity Act. In the 2018 report, it identified challenges faced by the ecosystem and biodiversity. When presenting the National Biodiversity Assessment report, as I quote the hon Minister in this regard said:

This body of knowledge should be used as a basis for policy planning and decision-making regarding the wise use and conservation of the country’s biodiversity assets, management and restoration of ecological infrastructure.

On working for fire, House Chairperson, we all know the devastating effect that wildfires have on our biodiversity, national parks and agriculture. Working on fire programme has provided job opportunities for more than 5 000 young women and men fully trained as forest firefighters and progress prevention and control of ... [Inaudible.] ... fires.

For the proper management of our forests, the Vote will, this year, see the department developing the regulations for the tabled National Veld and Forest Fires Amendment Bill. On forest management, the importance of protecting and looking after our national forests cannot be overemphasized. It is important that we ensure good management of forest land as it is in the interest of the ANC to realise the transfer of forest land to the traditional communities as the source of economic activities.

Hon Ntsube has already covered waste management area. We wish to indicate upfront that we really support the work that is happening in the fisheries sector where the level of transformation has been realised and continue to be realised within the Department OF Environment, Forestry and Fisheries. We heard that co-operatives and small scale fisheries will be issued with fishing licenses when other provinces have been

already allocated rights under fishing rights allocation. We commend the work that the Minister is doing.

*Tshivenḓa*:

Tsha u fhedzisela, ri khou ima na Mugaganyagwama uyu sa dzangano ḽa ANC. Ri khou tikedza. Ri ri kha vha ise phanḓa Minisiṱa u shumela vhathu. Ri khou livhuwa vhukuma.

*English*:

Thank you very much, House Chairperson.

The MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT: House

Chair, let me extend the greetings and best wishes to all hon members for Africa day. I don't have a lot of time. So, let me deal with a few issues. First of all, there has been an impassioned plea today that more should be done with regard to enforcement.

I can report to this House that over the last financial year, there were 3 500 inspections conducted by the Green Scorpions. These inspections resulted in 971 enforcement notices, and also resulted in 203 criminal investigations being handed over to the national prosecuting authority. Not bad - I'm sure you will agree, hon members - for one year.

All of these cases were in the many different areas for which we have responsibility: Wildlife trafficking; air pollution, water pollution, Phakisa Operation Five, as well as other areas where there were transgressions of environmental law.

Yes, it is true that there are budget constraints, but in my view, this particular enforcement agency is doing extremely well. We are also working hard with municipal and provincial enforcement agencies to train their inspectors better and to empower them to add force-multiplier effect to the work that we are doing.

In addition to the work we are doing around inspection and enforcement, we are also doing a lot of support work for provinces and municipalities. We’ve spoken about the work we’re doing with regard to climate change. There’s a tremendous amount of work we’re doing with regard to waste management because we are of the view that our country is dirty. I think it’s for this reason that, in this particular year, we have targeted the cleaning and greening program so that we can target stabbing damping areas in communities.

However, hon members, we have to agree that members of the public must change their behaviour. They must desist from

throwing household waste and fast-food packaging into the environment. We would also urge consumers to be much more conscious of the packaging that they consume and to join us in combating single use plastics when they purchase fast foods.

This is a whole area which I think that none of us want to see, because of the impact that it has on the environment, and more specifically on the oceans.

With regard to the vexed issue of permits for the wildlife economy, the high-level panel addressed this area in some detail, singling out red tape in what is known as the nine- plus-one. Nine-plus-one is a particular inhibitor to the biodiversity economy. This matter is indeed receiving attention. Of course, ultimately you have to take the people out of the process and utilise the developments of the fourth industrial revolution if you want to make it much more effective.

With regard to aquaculture, this is recognised as an important contributor and an important job creator. We are hoping that in the course of this financial year, the Agriculture Bill will come to the National Assembly.

I would want to say that we agree that we have to constantly address the issue of alien species. I think that we have to constantly work with our partners in provinces to ensure that we reduce the impact of alien species on our water supplies and also the fire threat that it poses.

I would want to say to hon member Van der Westhuizen: The Western Cape Government has a duty to provide appropriate shelters for homeless people. All we can do is request them to live the parks. We are not running the Department of Social Development. It is your government's responsibility in the Western Cape to make sure that these people, who are extremely vulnerable, should not be forced to seek the mountainside as a point of refuge. I think that this matter has been raised extensively with your government during the process of the, the Covid-19 pandemic.

Hon Arnolds, they say that the truth should never stand in the way of a good story. Indeed, you were very dramatic in your storytelling today, but let's look at the facts. The facts are that of that R3 billion irregular expenditure, only

R130 million comes from my term. The previous amounts came from previous terms, when I was not on the watch, as you put it. However, this does not mean I'm not taking responsibility.

We have laid criminal charges around this process. We have forensic investigations underway. We have disciplinary procedures underway. We have done retraining of our officials. We have re-established the decks and the backs with permanent chairpersons, so that all of these issues relating to tendering for suppliers should happen in the manner prescribed by law, going forward in the future.

With regard to car power, hon Labuschagne, I am the appeal authority. I don’t want to comment on this matter. However, last week the department did indicate that they are appointing an independent legal person to ensure that as the environmental impact assessment processes, EIA processes, are addressed, they are addressed within the full compliance of all prescripts that would need to be followed.

I can see, hon House Chair, that you are looking at your watch. I think I have utilised my five minutes. Let me thank all hon members once again and say that we appreciate your support. We appreciate your constructive criticism and we hope to work together in the future for the good of our environment. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

Debate concluded.

The HOUSE CHAIPERSON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND MEMBERS

SUPPORT (Ms W Ngwenya): That concludes the business of the day. I wish to thank the Minister, special delegates and Salga representatives for availing themselves for the debate.

The Council adjourned at 12:20