**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FRIDAY, 19 MAY 2023**

**VOTE NO 32 – FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND ENVIRONMENT**

***PROCEEDINGS OF HYBRID MINI PLENARY – GOOD HOPE CHAMBER***

Members of the miniplenary session met at Good Hope Chamber at 10:00.

House Chairperson Mr C T Frolick took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayers or meditation.

**APPROPRIATION BILL**

Debate on Vote No 32 – Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment

The MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT: Hon

House Chair, Deputy Minister Ms Makhotso Sotyu, hon Chairperson, Modise, and members of the committee, the Director-General, Ms Nomfundo Tshabalala, Team Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, CEOs and chairpersons of our boards of our entities, ladies and gentlemen, fellow South

Africans, good morning. I want to begin today by acknowledging my special guests who have joined these proceedings that are being live streamed from one of our beautiful natural assets, the Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, led by Ms Sive Melane who hails from Qunu in the Eastern Cape Province. Sive completed her BSc degree in Geographic Information Systems and Geology with the University of Fort Hare.

In July 2021, five years after she first graduated, Sive finally had a career break when she was recruited to the Groen Sebenza Programme as a trainee to support the Ecological Infrastructure for Water Security Project at the SA National Biodiversity Institute, Sanbi. Ms Melane is one of

1 117 graduates we have recruited to our Groen Sebenza Programme which provides young people with two years of work experience and aims to ensure they receive long-term work in the science sector, so that their education, knowledge and energies are fully harnessed to maintain our country’s natural resources.

Last year, at the Convention on Biological Diversity reached an agreement dubbed “New Deal for People and Nature” or the Kunming-Montreal Protocol which was adopted in December 2022.

The framework has three central aspects. The first is the recognition that human and ecosystem sustainability requires 30% of the land and 30% of the sea be placed under protection by 2030.

Secondly, that communities living in and adjacent to conservation estates must benefit from the economic opportunities created. And thirdly that the intellectual property of indigenous people which underpins many bioprospecting endeavours in the pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries must be recognised and rewarded. There was also agreement that developed countries must assist developing countries in achieving global conservation targets.

In March this year, our government adopted the White Paper on Conservation and Sustainable Use of South Africa’s Biodiversity which is intended to ensure we domesticate this significant global agreement. Through the support of the Global Environmental Facility, the department has received an early action grant which we are using to develop the implementation plan for our White Paper.

To attract financing to our biodiversity sector, our digital Biodiversity Investment Portal is now profiling projects within the biodiversity economy space to potential domestic and international investors. It is our intention to ensure that previously disadvantaged communities are able to use this platform to highlight their projects in the biodiversity value chain.

Our approved National Protected Areas Expansion Strategy provides an informed systematic approach on the expansion of the conservation estate with the rate of 0,5% increase annually. In line with this annual increase, South Africa will achieve a rate of 20% for its terrestrial space by 2036, and 10% in the same year. We envisage that through this process we are likely to achieve the Global 30 by 30 target for the marine space by the early 2040s.

Last year I indicated I will appoint a panel to advise me on voluntary exit from the captive lion breeding industry. I am pleased to report that the task team that was appointed in December and it’s making steady progress. Last month a public call was gazetted inviting registration by participants who wish to voluntarily exit the industry. And I have recently

extended the registration period by 30 days to afford more enterprises to take advantage of this opportunity.

Furthermore, now that we have completed the White Paper, we will now return to processing all the feedback we received from the Policy Paper on the High Level Panel recommendations. With regard to the threatened or protected species, Tops, regulations that were withdrawn recently, we have decided to strengthen the administrative processes and they will shortly put out for 30 days of public comment.

The SA National Parks, Sanparks, remains the international benchmark for conservation management in our country. As part of its commercialisation drive, this entity aims to deliver 39 new tourism products over the next three years in partnership with the private sector. Fourteen of these projects will commence in this financial year. In addition, these programmes provide economic opportunities to local communities by creating 2 209 direct jobs in local small, medium and micro- sized enterprises, SMMEs, from whom concessionaires will received goods and services valued at R75 million a year to Sanparks.

Last month, I was excited to launch Sanparks Vision 2040 - an inclusive process where South Africans can participate in the reimagining and co-creating of a new future for conservation in national protected areas. Given that Sanparks will celebrate a century of existence in 2026, the development of this vision is most timeous.

With regards to the recent study published by ENACT on corruption and criminality in the Kruger landscape, known as the Rademeyer Report, I am pleased to report to this House today, that the National Integrated Strategy to Combat Wildlife Crime was recently adopted by Cabinet last week. This means the National Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure, Natjoints, Priority Committee on Wildlife Trafficking will now identify critical measures for all government agencies to implemented over the next six months.

Due to the fact that Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Game Reserve has become a rhino poaching hotspot, this year our department will support Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife to combat rhino poaching. In this regard we will also invest R40 million to improve the boundary fence as part of our assistance. In the Kruger Park itself we are focusing on improving the wellness and wellbeing

of our staff so that they are not lured into the illicit trade. Measures being implemented include career path development and training, ranger wellness and counselling programmes, improvements in staff housing and accommodation and putting in place an anonymous tip-off line and setting up liaison committees with local communities.

To ensure greater safety of our visitors, the Tourism Business Council of South Africa has installed hi-tech surveillance equipment at Numbi Gate and the Kruger Lowveld Chamber of Business and Tourism is supporting a community training and development initiative to improve security around this access point. I wish to express our appreciation to these stakeholders for these important support.

It is almost a year since the St Lucia mouth estuary breached naturally. Following the 2021 artificial breaching, I appointed a panel of experts from which recommendations were made, relating to the future management of the park. So far we have done extensive work on developing the new estuarine management plan which we expect to be completed by August.

To deal with the extensive back flooding of farmlands, a panel of environmental consultants has been appointed to conduct the necessary environmental assessment. And if all goes well, it is estimated that within 90 days we could begin the process of cleaning the levees and the canals. The critically important Mouse-Free Marion Project, undertaken in partnership with BirdLife South Africa, aims to restore Marion Island - a special nature reserve and Ramsar site wetland of international importance, by eradicating invasive house mice from the island. Provided Birdlife South Africa can raise the remaining funding from a range of interested international donors, this ambitious project is envisaged to be completed in 2025. The first phase of removing the original, and now abandoned, meteorological research station, will commence in October this year.

The National Zoological Gardens in Tshwane have been incorporated into Sanbi. As part of a new repositioning strategy, we aim to modernise the zoo and enhance its role in species conservation, research, biodiversity education and public engagement, tourism and recreation. In asserting Sanbi as a leader in zoological research and conservation, investments are also being made to upgrade laboratories, the

genetic services unit, the animal hospital and a biobank for animal tissues. This will ensure that the zoo plays an important role in combatting illegal wildlife trade and providing wildlife forensic services. To enhance income- generating activities, such as the cable car and the restaurant we will be entering into public-private partnerships and this will also assist us to improve animal enclosures and the aquarium.

Our country is faced with significant waste management challenges. These include poor landfill practices and sporadic household waste collection as well as unacceptable levels of illegal dumping in many parts of the country. To support municipalities, our department will focus on improving cleanliness in Mafikeng, Mangaung, Bisho and the other provincial towns.

The Expanded Public Works Programme will support cleaning and greening by assisting with litter picking in designated streets and clearing of illegal dumps as well as greening and planting of trees. Their efforts are being complimented by the

32 waste enterprises that have been supported to increase

recycling of construction and demolition waste, plastic, packaging, and other waste streams.

It is worth noting that over the past two financial years, the department spent R168 million to assist 58 municipalities to purchase the yellow waste collection fleet. Our Extended Producer Responsibility, EPR, schemes for paper and packaging, electrical, electronic and lighting sectors have begun to divert waste. Last year, one and a half million tons of paper and packing was diverted from landfill. Nearly 19 000 tons of e-waste was also diverted over the same period.

The department is strengthening compliance and enforcement measures especially against free riders that undermine our collective EPR efforts in the recycling area. The department’s Recycling Enterprise Support Programme has, over the past six years, supported 56 start-ups and emerging SMMEs within the waste sector, providing more than R300 million in financial support and creating 1 500 jobs.

Our fishing sector is an important contributor to our economy and to the improvement of the lives of our coastal communities. In 2021, the department received

2 473 applications for the allocation of commercial rights in nine fishing sectors. Fishing rights were allocated to 714at the beginning of last year. Work to complete the 1 213 appeals is progressing well. By April this year we had completed four sectors and we hope that very soon we will also complete the squid sector. The appeal decisions in the remaining sectors are set for finalisation by 30 October 2023.

With regard to the allocation of small-scale fishing rights in the Western Cape, the department has rerun the process and the list of successful applicants was published on 6 March. We are now in the appeals phase and it is our intention to conclude the entire process by October 2023. That will hopefully then benefit over 3 500 declared traditional small-scale fishers in the Western Cape.

I am pleased to announce today that we have now a draft strategy and action plan to combat trade in illegally harvested abalone which is in consultation phase. We are also leading the process of developing marine sector plans as part of the Marine Spatial Planning Unit. In an effort to manage competing interests in the marine environment, last year I committed to researching the impact of seismic surveys.

The department has produced an assessment of international best practice in mitigating impacts of these surveys and is now determining how these can be used on local ocean areas. We are also working with the PetroSA and the Council for Geoscience to map historic records of seismic surveys to determine if any impact was observed during these previous surveys.

The published Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change confirms the world has already warmed at an unprecedented rate and that Africa is already experiencing widespread losses and damage due to climate change. Our country’s mitigation and adaptation architecture are at an advanced stage. We have developed the sectoral emission targets that outline emission reduction goals for key sectors.

With respect to carbon budget allocation, Cabinet has approved a methodological framework to determine emissions allocation to industrial sectors for the 2023 to 2027 period. Parallel to this process, the department is also developing carbon budget regulations that will also address the submission and

processing of climate change mitigation plans to be submitted by industry.

On the adaptation front, we continue to roll out our local government support programme. In addition to assisting 44 district municipalities to develop their climate change plans, we are now working with nine provinces to review their existing climate change plans and align them with the Climate Change Bill that hon members are currently processing.

The SA Weather Service, Saws, is in the process of automating and modernising its observations infrastructure. This includes upgrades to mitigate the effect of load shedding. Increased collection and accuracy of data will ensure we can warn the public of extreme weather events. We also promised through last year’s budget speech that we are working on the regulations for implementing and enforcing priority air quality management plans. I am pleased to indicate that we have now published these regulations for public comment.

As our country faces severe load shedding, I am pleased to share with you today that in our Environmental Impact Assessment, EIA, section, there is a project pipeline of 9 789

MW for renewable energy, made up of 2 899 MW of Solar PV, and

6 890 for wind energy. Many of these applications include battery storage. We are working hard to cut the red tape and get these projects finalised and in this regard, we have reduced our decision making timeframes from 107 days to 57 days.

Grid capacity, as we all know, is a major constraint to scaling up energy transition and that is a view across the board with consensus from stakeholders, government, business, labour and civil society. Grid capacity is a national priority to solve, not only for our transition needs but also for our short-term emergency generation to solve load shedding. We have fifteen EIA applications relating to transmission and distribution infrastructure which we are also prioritising for decision-making.

In recent times, as we battle load shedding, concern has been expressed around the delays that are being considered in decommissioning for aging power stations. Government is clear that we must battle both load shedding and climate change. It is not a one or the other decision. Current modelling will advise how we balance our decommissioning schedule so that we

can achieve energy security within the context of our climate change commitments and air quality improvement.

As I conclude our last Budget Vote speech for the sixth administration, allow me to borrow the words articulated by the first environmentalist and African woman to receive a Noble Laureate, Wangari Maathai who said, “I’m very conscious of the fact that you can’t do it alone. It’s teamwork. When you do it alone you run the risk that when you are no longer there, nobody else will do it.”

Let me thank the team in environment who has worked so hard to enhance our environmental obligations. Hon Modise and the portfolio committee for consistent oversight which keeps us on our toes, the scientific experts and stakeholders who advise me on many complex matters on a number of panels that I have established, my wonderful Deputy Minister, Ms Makhotso Sotyu, our Director-General, Ms Nomfundo Tshabalala, Team Department of Environment, Forestry & Fisheries which includes over

1. 300 officials throughout the country, our board members and CEOs of Saws, iSimangaliso, Sanbi and Sanparks for all your dedication to environmental matters, and your never-ending failure to take my telephone calls late at night. We remain

dedicated to environmental matters and to the sustainable use of our country’s natural resources. I thank you.

Mr P M P MODISE: A very good morning to you, House Chairperson, good morning to Minister Creecy and Deputy Minister, Sotyu, the esteemed colleagues from the Portfolio Committee of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, fellow Members of Parliament, the stakeholders in the Environmental Sector and ladies and gentlemen, good morning. I wish to extend a warm welcome to all of you on behalf of the Portfolio Committee of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment.

We gather here today for the annual debate of the Budget Vote for the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment. Firstly, I want to express my gratitude to all the members of the portfolio committee, their unwavering commitment to protect our environment for the benefit of the present and future of the South Africans is greatly appreciated. The dedication, the diligence, the intellectual contributions of our committee members, along with their involvement on the budget discussions and Annual Performance Plans, APPs, have been truly remarkable.

It is our oversight responsibility to ensure that an environment that is not harmful to health and the wellbeing of our people to protect the environment for the benefit of the present and future generations. The successful use of biodiversity lies at the heart of the economic contribution of our environmental sector. Our country is blessed with remarkable biodiversity from our rich terrestrial ecosystems of our diverse marines and environment. We must protect and preserve this natural heritage for future generations.

The budget allocation empowers the department to implement conversation strategies, manage protected areas, combat wildlife, and ensure the sustainable use of our natural resources. Through these efforts, we safeguard our unique ecosystems, and we promote the wellbeing of both wildlife and our people. By investing in environmental protection, we create opportunities for green jobs, for sustainable industries such as the secular economy eco-tourism, contributing to the overall wellbeing of our nation, and fostering a resilient and thriving economy.

The environmental sector plays a transformative role in our society, provides opportunities for social empowerment,

inclusivity, and sustainable development. The allocation of this budget enables our department to mold and build human capacity for the sector, engage local communities in conservation efforts, and foster social cohesion through shared environmental bids.

I am bracing this principle of environmental, justice and transformation to create a more equitable society where all the South Africans can access and enjoy the benefits of a healthy environment. Our country faces a plethora of the environmental challenges such as the impacts of climate change, water scarcity, the biodiversity laws, land degradation and various forms of pollution.

We are thus aware, that the allocation of this allocation does not amount to the immense resource requirements dictated by the legislative mandate upon by the department. Based on the scientific projections, climate change is going to worsen these environmental challenges, implying that the budget ... [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): May I make a request again that, those who are on the virtual platform, you are now

disturbing the debate in the House. Ensure that your microphone stays off, and may I also request the National Assembly Table to instruct the ICT that as soon as the microphone goes on from the virtual platform that is not recognized, be switched off, please. Thank you.

Mr P M P MODISE: Based on the scientific projections, climate change is going to worsen these environmental challenges, implying that the budget allocation towards combating or mitigating the impacts of climate change should be increased. We are also conscious of the fiscal constraints that the country currently faces, thus we appreciate the allocation of this budget for the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment.

Despite these challenges, I have confidence in the department’s capabilities and its commitment to achieving its set targets for the 2023-24 financial year, including that 80% mark that the Minister has set for the department. The executive management, the technical personnel, and the assurance provided by you, hon Minister and your team, are really reassuring to us as a portfolio committee.

The department through its nine programmes and its entities, that includes Isimangaliso Wetland Park Authority, SA Biodiversity Institute, SANParks, SA Weather Service and the Marine Living Resource Fund have capable professionals to advance the achievement of the constitutional mandate and the plans for 2023-24 financial year.

Having thoroughly examined this particular budget, and the Annual Performance Plans, on behalf of the ANC and the portfolio committee, I unreservedly support the allocation of this budget, amounting to R9,8 billion for the fiscal years, 2023-24 year of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment. Thank you very much.

Ms A M M WEBER: Hon Chair, if the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, DFFE, really wishes to successfully deliver on its constitutional mandate, then the national and provincial authorities need to get properly aligned. Too much hay falls on the ground between the different authorities and in the end, nothing gets resolved. Since the national Threatened or Protected Species, Tops, regulations came into place in 2007, some provinces still have not even implemented them - that is 16 years. So much time is

spent on developing fancy regulations, bills and amendments but the enforcement and implementation are not there to back it up.

This government has failed to protect our rhinos and elephants from poaching. Our communities still suffer from heavy air pollution. Sewage overflows, plastic pollution and disposable diapers continue to destroy our rivers and oceans.

Sheba, the escaped pet tiger, captured the attention of the whole country, only to be killed, because she was a danger to the public. The illegal trade in tigers is lucrative and a full set of bones can go up to $ 70 000. South Africa has signed the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, Cites, International Agreement and tigers are included on Appendix I, prohibiting their international commercial trade, but still South Africa has traded over 200 live captive-bred tigers already in 2018. Why does the department and provincial authorities not adhere to the Cites regulations? Are they above that?

It is alarming that in four provinces, a permit is not even needed to keep a pet tiger. Does the department care?

Currently the unemployment rate in South Africa is 32,9%, one of the highest in the world. It is projected that another 850 jobs will be lost due to load shedding. It is not wise to stop a whole hunting industry where there are some culprits.

The DA agrees that only captive lion breeding with the sole purpose for canned hunting and lion bones should be stopped. We are against lion boned and canned hunting.

According to the High Level Panel Report, the department is supposed to do an audit and identify all the lion farmers that breed lions unethically for canned hunting. However, the lion task team has gotten nowhere and uses old information. This is unfair to everyone involved, including lion owners not involved with canned hunting, NGOs and the lions themselves.

These lions should be relocated and introduced to the world, instead of being euthanised. Euthanisation should only be the last resort, when there is no other option for the lions.

*Afrikaans*:

Renostergetalle in Suid-Afrika is besig om teen ’n baie vinnige spoed af te neem. Miskien moet die departement by die grootste en mees suksesvolle renoster boer in Suid-Afrika gaan

kersopsteek. Hierdie boer het omtrent net soveel renosters, indien nie meer as die Kruger Nasionale Park en in al die jare was daar nie een renoster gestroop nie.

*English*:

Sadly, this farmer now has to sell his 2 000 rhinos as there is no assistance financially to keep on conserving them. What will happen to these rhinos? If they are released into Kruger Park, it won’t be long before they all are poached. Does the DFFE have plan for them?

We know that after the wildlife hunting, South Africa and the Professional Hunters Associations served papers to halt new Tops regulations, the Minister immediately withdrew the Gazette and agreed to pay costs? Does this mean that you actually agreed that the regulations were untenable for wildlife and habitat conservation? What a waste of taxpayers’ money!

It is clear that there is a desperate need for national and provincial environmental authorities, Unfortunately, whatever Minister Creecy attempts to achieve, her party will never see the environment as a priority and will never give the

department or its entities the money it needs to actually resolve the challenges.

Next year, when the Moonshot Pact saves South Africa, the DA will ensure that finally, our environmental is treated with the dignity it deserves. Thank you.

Mr M N PAULSEN: Hon Chairperson, greetings to the President and the Commander in Chief of the 26 July movement, the Economic Freedom Fighters, President Julius Sello Malema, the officials from Sars, members, fellow Members of Parliament, and you too, Minister. Minister, I noticed when you were thanking the entities, you were thanking all the entities accept the Marine Living Resources Fund. I would not either. You are right; you should not.

Part of this department’s mandate is to ensure secure, ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources, while promoting justifiable economic and social development. We need to ask ourselves constantly whether this department under the leadership and guidance of this Ministry is fulfilling this mandate.

Many municipalities are failing to carry out the environmental management functions like refuse collection to poor black communities, as is the case in areas of metros like Ekurhuleni in Johannesburg, until the EFF came to rescue in those municipalities.

The EFF engages in the Andries Tatane Clean Up Campaign across the country every weekend. President Julius Malema, Commander in Chief of the EFF leads the Andries Tatane Clean Up Campaign in a different province every weekend. The Andries Tatane Clean Up Campaign provides relief for underserved communities across the country, even in the DA-led municipalities like the City of Tshwane, Cape Town, George, Knysna, Theewaterskloof, to name a few.

The irony is that we have a national waste management strategy, a legislative requirement of the Waste Act of 2008. As an example of how dismally the ANC fails at implementing anything, we should have a closer look at the goals of the Waste Act.

In Goal 1 of the Waste Act, this ANC government says that it will promote waste minimisation, reuse, recycling and recovery

of waste. In Goal 2 of the Waste Act, this ANC government says that it will ensure the effective and efficient delivery of waste services. Goal 8 - here is the irony – states that this ANC government will establish effective compliance with it and enforcement of the Waste Act. We know that is not happening.

The annual performance plans states that 300 councilors and officials were trained in waste management. Out of all the councilors and officials, only 300. We are losing the fight against waste.

Minister, section 2(j) of the Marine Living Resources Act states, and I quote: “ ... the need to restructure the fishing industry to address the historical imbalances and to achieve equity in all branches of the fishing industry”. Furthermore, section 18(5) of the MLRA states, “ ... in granting any right refer to in subsection 1, the Minister shall, in order to achieve the objectives, contemplated in section 2, have particular regard to the need to permit new entrants, particularly those from historically disadvantaged sectors of society”.

These two sections are the cornerstone for the transformation of the fishing industry. It enables you, Minister, to introduce new entrants into the various fishing sectors. Many fishers, registered companies had made applications for Fishing Rights Allocation Process, Frac, 2020. We now know that their efforts were in vain. There is no way that this department will allow black people to threaten the domain of white monopoly capital.

We must go and compete in the lower leagues in the congested small-scale fishery sector. The Western Cape process for the allocation of small-scale fishing rights that started in 2005- 06 financial year, is yet to be concluded. Of the 8 500 people that were considered as per the court order in 2005, only

1. 037 verification forms were collected.

More than half of the people involved in the 2016 verification process have disappeared. Our people have died, while waiting for this ANC government to give them permission to fish. We have no choice but to poach that perlemoen, Minister.

The fishing management branch has never delivered services timeously, due to human capacity shortages. Frac 2020 became

Frac 2022, due to staff shortages and only one phase of the appeals has been finalised. You say it is on track, I say it is way behind time. The fishing rights process under this ANC government has been nothing but a fantastic catastrophe.

Minister, I believe this department missed a golden opportunity when it handed Knoflokskraal to Public Works. It is common cause that the most deprived sections of our people are those in the rural areas, like our people in Knoflokskraal in Grabouw. They have little or no land, little or no food, little or no income, and struggle daily with the burden of poverty,

Forestry is rural-based and there is a natural link between it and the rural population. It can provide opportunity and hope and can add dignity to the environment. There is still no strategy as to how this government will ensure broader participation in forestry

Lastly, why are the public hearings on the Climate Change Bill rushed in such a manner? In most cases, the hearings are poorly planned and many of those with attend use it to express

their frustration with this ANC government. The EFF does not support this Budget. Thank you.

Mr N SINGH: Thank you very hon Chairperson. Firstly, I want to acknowledge the sterling political leadership by the Minister and the Deputy Minister of this department. It is commendable that they lead, knowing exactly what is required to sort out all our environmental problems in the country.

In addition, I would like to acknowledge to the current chairperson the work done by who I would have called an aggressive leader hon Faith Mutambi. She has really been an aggressive leader of this committee, and we can all attest to that, sitting long hours and dealing with many issues. I wish her well in her new career path.

I am not surprised that a number of the points I want to raise today were also raised by you in your speech. I think that is because many of us who care about the environment share a common understanding of the issues. We may have differences in terms of how we tackle the issues, but at least we know what the issues are in the country.

One of the areas that I thought I should touch on very briefly is we are a bit concerned that whilst overall the department’s performing relatively well, there are certain programmes and divisions within the department that really require to be jacked up. When we look at audit reports and performance reports, we find that they are really not doing their tasks and money is not being spent in those particular divisions.

This is something we have been talking about for years. In the Seventh Parliament, this needs to come to an end.

I appreciate the comments on the St. Lucia area, and the farmers, and appreciate the fact that you, Minister, personally went to that area. And you met not only small farmers, but also the larger farmers. I think it is important for us to care for all South Africans, irrespective of whether they are big or small, black, white, red, or blue. Not that red sitting on my left there.

But I think it is positive that something is being done in the St. Lucia area, and we look forward to that environmental report sooner rather than later, so we can deal with the challenges being faced by the farmers there.

On captive lion breeding, we note the committee high-level panel’s report, and we all welcome that report. You referred to the general notice on voluntary exit. I would just like to know how effective is the voluntary exit? You’ve extended the period. How many people have already submitted voluntary exit? Because at the end of the day, I think what we should be looking at is bringing a complete end to these abhorrent practices and protecting Africa’s iconic species. And whether or not the voluntary exit is going to help, we don’t know.

Time will tell. But I think we have just got to stop the practice for the sake of not only the lions that can’t speak for themselves, but for the sake of the environment and our tourism industry.

When speaking about animals that cannot speak for themselves, I think primate welfare is also an issue that often goes unnoticed. And this lack of public awareness leads to abuse and neglect of the species. It is therefore imperative that we not only address the legal aspects of primate cruelty, but also that the department focuses on fostering educational awareness and supporting specialised care and emergency rescue centres.

With regard to the Climate Change Bill, every time the chairperson introduces the Bill in public hearings, he says to those who are there that there have been over 13 000 written and oral representations received so far and I think that’s a sizable number. I am very pleased that I have been invited to speak and I think hon Chair will remember at Pinetown there was a school there, Durban Girls College. And they have asked me speak to them about the Bill. They want to make some submissions as well, which I will bring back to the committee. I am doing that sometimes in June.

On climate change, I remember the hon President standing here and answering questions on the relationship between the energy Ministers, Mantashe, Ramokgopa, Pravin Gordhan and yourself. I am happy to hear that you are reducing timeframes on dealing with the Environmental Impact Assessments, EIAs. But this car power ship issue, where are we with it? Because on the one hand, you hear that we require this electricity very urgently. On the other hand, there are the environmental concerns. So where are we? We have got to come to some decision.

And lastly, in the last 20 seconds, the issue of waste to energy, which has been mentioned by you and other speakers

here. I mean, we have got to start thinking of innovative ways, ways to energy solutions. And there are ways, proven technology, which would become a strategic enabler to support crucial future requirements, not only for electricity, but also hydrogen, phosphorus, fuel, ammonia, bulk energy storage, bulk hot water, and other applications. So I think we need to be more innovative in that industry. The IFP will support this Budget Vote. Thank you. Thank you, Honourable Member.

Ms T BREEDT: Thank you, House Chair. This department plays a crucial role in not only safeguarding the future of our wildlife, but also in safeguarding our environment so as to keep our environment free from pollution and thus safe for our citizens.

The ANC as the governing party is failing in the obligation of the state as a trustee of protected areas to fulfil the rights contained in Section 24 of the Constitution, to have the environment protected for the benefit of present and future generations through reasonable legislative and other measures.

Although the White Paper on Conservation and Sustainable Use of South Africa’s Biodiversity is to be welcomed, there is a

complete disconnect between the lofty principles enumerated in the White Paper and the reality on the ground where an ANC administration has allowed South Africa’s network of protected areas to wither from neglect, corruption and nepotism.

This is clearly evidenced in the recent Endangered Wildlife Trust, EWT, report, the State of Provincial Nature Reserves in SA, which noted across all provinces there are inadequate budget allocations for effective provincial reserve management. In many provinces, most government funding goes to salaries, bonuses, and human resources, with very little allocated for maintenance and operational expenditure. Surely, hon Minister, you cannot sit idly by with findings like this, even though public relations, PRs, are not directly in your care.

It is almost impossible to envisage how this society, living in harmony with nature, as spoken about in the Biodiversity White Paper, could arise in a future in which provincial reserves, already struggling for survival, are allowed to fail through lack of effective management and resources. What must also be asked is how will Goal 3 of the White Paper, ensuring access and benefit sharing in a fair and equitable manner by

local communities, living with and adjacent to Big Five areas be delivered from already impoverished reserves.

What is just as worrying is South African National Parks, Sanparks’ inability to stem the imminent extirpation of rhinos in the Kruger National Park, where 80 ranger posts, including three section rangers, remain unfilled and a long-promised integrity testing policy has yet to be implemented.

The government has also failed to implement the National Integrated Strategy against illegal wildlife trade, which has been languishing on the President’s desk since 2017, thereby hampering law enforcement efforts. Further failed to bring into operation the National Environmental Management Laws Amendment, NEMLA, Bill, which was first introduced to Parliament in 2017, but only *gazetted* in June 2022.

The government inexplicably withdrew the long-delayed amendments to the Threatened or Protected Species, TOPS, regulations as well as the elephant norms and standards, on March 2023 in the face of a legal challenge, using more time required to study as an explanation, agreeing to pay the applicants legal costs and admitting to wasting the court’s

time, despite Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment, DFFE, legal having submitted a 91 page answering affidavit.

We welcome, however, the TOPS regulations, as the Minister announced, that will be available shortly and would like to see that done with the elephant norms and standards as well.

To this date, the department’s legal team have failed to submit an answering affidavit to the interim interdict granted in the High Court in April 2022, overturning DFFE’s quotas for the hunting and export of elephant, rhinos and leopards, so no hunting of these species may take place to the detriment of the hunting or of the wildlife industry.

Turning to the environment we live in daily, I become even more worried as the same trends continue. You can literally list on one hand the number of landfill sites that check all legislative boxes necessary. Take Streitfontein Landfill in Kroonstad for an example. Besides the fact that there are residential properties too near the landfill and the fence is non-existent. The municipality admits that it has been full since 2018, that rehabilitation cannot be done because nobody

tenders for it and no new landfill site has been identified to rectify this problem.

Also, are the permit regulations not met and so we stumble forward year after year. In the Free State, Free State Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, DESTEA, even admits that although they budget for solid waste management, it is never used because municipalities have an inability to use these funds. Minister, I also want to implore you to put pressure on your counterparts in the Ministry of Water and Sanitation. Our water sources are being polluted by raw sewage from failing infrastructure on a daily basis.

In the Setsoto Local Municipality in the Free State, we had a burst sewage main run directly into the river for two weeks before the necessary repairs could be done. Our animals deserve better. Our citizens deserve better. South Africa deserves better. I thank you. Thank you.

Mr B H HOLOMISA: Hon Chairperson, hon Minister and Deputy Minister, hon members, environmental management and climate change are permanent features of our situation as South

Africans. Whether we like it or not, climate change is here to stay and the majority of us are unprepared for what nature can throw in our direction.

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment must take the lead and produce *Aide-mémoire* that will help South African households to capacitate themselves to survive the ever-increasing natural disasters. Such an *Aide-mémoire* should also be extended to all municipalities. In some areas it is already unseasonably snowing and we cannot rely on electricity only to warm our homes. Wood for burning is becoming scarce and it would be advisable for communities to have forests planted for the sake of growing firewood. We need to intensify our people’s understanding of the effects of climate change and the need to preserve the environment. These topics must be highlighted in the schools’ syllabus.

Finally, regarding load shedding, early warning signs of the pending crisis were ignored. The suffering nation waits for the powers that be to sort out this mess...

*IsiXhosa:*

Bayeke ukube bephixana apha. [Sound interruption of the interpreter.] Kuthiwani ke ngoku xa kunje?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Holomisa, you may continue now and I will ask that the IT team sort out the interpreter that is interrupting the speaker. There is interpretation services in the Chamber so we can hear. So, they must sort that out but hon Holomisa you can now continue and conclude please.

*IsiXhosa:*

Mnu B H HOLOMISA: Hayi, makasese aqhube, ayigqibezele ngokwakhe, ndigqibile mna ngoku.

*English:*

Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Thank you, hon member. The next speaker is the hon Deputy Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE

ENVIRONMENT: Chairperson, Hon Minister Ms Barbara Creecy,

chairperson of the portfolio committee Mr Pogiso Modise, Members of Parliament, the management of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment family, thank you very much. It is once again a pleasure for me to be addressing this House, in a month that we celebrate our country and the world’s rich biodiversity. In a few days, South Africa will join the nations of the world in commemorating International Biological Diversity Day. The commemoration is imperative for South Africa, as we are one of 17 megadiverse countries in the world. This places on us a huge responsibility to ensure that our biodiversity is managed and conserved sustainably for current and future generations that depend on it for life and livelihoods.

Our government is deliberately taking pro-disadvantaged, gender and youth-responsive environment and climate issues into the heart of transformation and economic decision-making and related programmes, in particular, local government budgeting processes. As such, our government has already laid solid policies, plans, budgets and monitoring processes for a progressive sustainable environment. All that is needed now, in the words of the President in his SONA 2023 address, is to “concentrate on those issues that concern South Africans the

most; load shedding; unemployment; poverty and the rising cost of living and crime and corruption.”

All four issues identified by the President are urgent service delivery matters that the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment has mainstreamed into its prioritised programmes. The District Development Model is one such programme. As a District Development Model National Champion, I have led a number of campaigns in communities in the North West and Free State provinces to not only discuss service delivery challenges that exist, particularly waste services but also to look at issues such as procurement and job creation to promote and support local businesses and to involve local communities.

During each visit, we have participated in clean-up and greening campaigns to raise awareness about litter, waste collection and landfill management. We have also handed over waste collection compactor trucks, front-end loaders, and other materials required by municipalities to improve service delivery across the nine provinces. Earlier this year, I had the pleasure to launch the Waste Management Intervention Cleaning and Green Project in Vryburg, North West, marking

2023 as the Year of Implementation under the District Development Model with the aim of accelerating services to the people.

To assist the municipalities, our department engaged with the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs and National Treasury to enable municipalities to procure waste collection and landfill operation vehicles through the Municipal Infrastructure Grant, Mig. The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment has secured five waste collection vehicles for the local municipalities of the Dr Ruth Mompati District Municipality, which I, as the National District Development Model Champion, handed over to the local mayors early this year. Our work does not stop there.

For instance, the Bethulie Dam Community Project in Kopanong Local Municipality is one of the key projects identified to stimulate the economy of Xhariep District Municipality in the Free State province, under the ambit of the District Development Model. In this instance, the department has appointed a suitably qualified service provider to facilitate the development of the Bethulie Dam Community Project Business Plan over six months. The business plan will include, but will

not be limited to, the operational objectives, marketing, investment, and financial strategy for us to be able to create jobs in that poor municipality.

The Planting of Trees and Greening is another of the prioritised programmes within the department. The department plays a leading role in the implementation of the country’s commercial forestry masterplan, which not only promotes growth but also investment, into a sector that has the potential to contribute to job creation and increased production of forestry products. During this time, more than 70 potential contractors have been trained in forestry skills in the Western Cape in partnership with the Fibre, Paper and Manufacturing Sector Education and Training, FPM Seta.

In terms of the expansion of the forestry footprint to support the value chain, about 30 500 hectares have been identified for Environmental Impact Assessments so that new afforestation can take place. Forestry is also key to the greening of our country. As we commence the third year of implementation of the greening programme, we can confirm that the department planted more than 100 000 trees in the 2022-23 financial year. With the support and participation of broader stakeholders,

more than 985 000 have been planted already. Young leadership is critical and essential to translate all our policies and plans into action, for a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Eighty students are to be selected to be part of the FOREST21 project for strengthening capacity in South African higher education in forestry.

These students will work with an international team of learners, contributing and testing the knowledge generated as the new curricula are developed. There will be a Climate-smart workshop in Finland, followed by a Forestry Entrepreneurship initiative. This programme has resulted in the introduction of the Forestry Qualification at the Tshwane University of Technology’s Mbombela Campus. It will contribute immensely to the sector, especially in the afforested area of Mpumalanga.

We have started supporting 14 students at one of the forestry institutions with stipends for their experiential learning from April 2023. Additional resources will assist in ensuring the sustainability of the initiative for the benefit of our students within the sector.

With all said and done, the above-mentioned progressive and developmental initiatives and endeavours by our government and

department can never come to an ever-lasting successful fruition, if corruption and crime against our environment continue to persist. Crime and corruption are two-pronged evil that prevents any nation from progressing. n our mandate, when we speak about environmental crimes, the focus is largely on wildlife crimes such as rhino poaching, or on pollution of our rivers, the air and our general environment. Not often spoken about, is the serious scourge of plant crimes in our country, particularly the poaching and smuggling of succulent plants in our country. Without emergency interventions, there is a very high probability of them going extinct within the next 10 years. My department, together with the SA National Biodiversity Institute, Sanbi, is spearheading the national effort to bring this poaching under control.

As I conclude, would like to thank the Hon Minister for her leadership within the Forestry, Fisheries and Environmental sectors in the past year, and to thank the director-general, Ms Nomfundo Tshabalala, and the departmental officials, board chairpersons and CEOs of our entities, for their support. I also thank you, hon chair, Mr Modise and members of the portfolio committee in particular, for your robust engagement and guidance. We appreciate that, myself, the Minister and the

team. Allow me to close with the words of the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who said: “Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.” I thank you very much, Chairperson.

Ms H S WINKLER: House Chair, last year, 461 people died in devastating floods that pummelled my home province of KwaZulu- Natal. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s, IPCC, Sixth Assessment Report, AR6, in South Africa and the Southern Africa region, climate models project increases in temperature that are higher than the global average, increased frequency and intensity of heatwaves, and shifts in rainfall patterns that could lead to more frequent droughts in some areas and increased flood risk in others.

The reality is that torrential rains, devastating droughts, and intense heatwaves are an imminent reality that municipalities across South Africa are woefully unprepared to handle.

The National Climate change Bill which is presently underway is intended to provide a regulatory framework for the effective management of inevitable climate change impacts

through enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change, but, in its present incarnation, it does not provide enough resources and support for local municipalities, is unclear on how climate policies will be implemented at the local level, and it is short on enforcement mechanisms to ensure that municipalities follow through on their responsibilities.

These are just to name a few. As it stands, we are facing a governance crisis across South Africa where municipalities are collapsing like dominos. Unable to deliver on basic services, the prospect that these municipalities are going to be tasked with protecting the people of South Africa from climate change impacts is just unfathomable.

But, there is a city that is paving the way in its climate change response, one that is emerging as a global front- runner, and yes, you guessed it, it is the DA-led city of Cape Town. Among only 43 cities worldwide, out of 596, that have been scored, the DA-led City of Cape Town received the highest grade from the Carbon Disclosure Project, CDP. The scoring took into account how sub-national city governments manage, measure and address greenhouse emissions, as well as other

climate-related risks such as water security. There is hope, South Africa. And it comes in the shape of a DA-led government.

One of the most amazing things about our country is that we have a constitution that clearly outlines in Section 24 that: Everyone has the right to an environment which is not harmful to their health or well-being and a right to have the environment protected for the benefit of present and future generations. There are however too many instances where you and your department are failing to honour these provisions.

Minister Creecy, two years ago, the High Level Panel tasked to review policies, regulatory measures, practices and policy positions that are related to hunting, trade, captive keeping, management and handling of elephant, lion, leopard and rhinoceros released a report that was unambiguous in its direction – it called for an end to the captive lion hunting industry. Two years later, and we find ourselves still with at least 9 000 lions in captivity and counting.

In March this year, we finally saw a glimmer of hope when the Honourable Minister called for stakeholder participation

regarding voluntary exit from this industry. This is a commendable first step, yet it remains just that, a step. As we speak, lions continue to be bred for canned lion hunting, this is illogical. If the aim is indeed to phase out the industry, then why has a moratorium on breeding not been implemented?

In February of this year, you authorised the export of 12 cheetahs to India, as part of a 10-year cheetah translocation project in a Memorandum of Understanding with India. Two of these cheetah have now died in the last two months. Minister Creecy, you would be aware that non-detrimental findings for threatened or protected species must undergo a public consultation process before they are adopted.

Now, we know that this did not transpire, and instead ‘advice’ from the scientific authority was used justify this export.

What has further come to light is equally as disturbing: In accordance with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, Cheetahs, which are Appendix 1 Species, that means species threatened with extinction or protected species, require a permit for export.

Minister Creecy, your department has revealed that these permits do not exist. The fact is that you and your department have unlawfully exported 12 of our South African Cheetah. And now 2 are dead. Who is going to take responsibility? And how are you going to justify the further export of any cheetah under these circumstances.

Now, moving to one of the most beautiful and biodiverse provinces in South Africa, my home province of KwaZulu-Natal. In March of this year, I wrote a letter to your office requesting urgent assistance in the sewage crisis in eThekwini municipality. To date, I have not even received an acknowledgement of receipt.

However, I am not sure why I would have been surprised at this. The lacklustre, arrogant, and ineffective response to the sewage spills that has basically destroyed Durban’s tourism economy is symptomatic of what this ANC government has come to represent at every level of government. I am uncertain as to what more needs to transpire to get your attention on why immediate serious intervention is required in this sewage disaster: More dying fish, more sick people in hospitals, more joblessness?

What the residents of the city can count on though is that the DA will once again do, what you are too scared to do, and that is take the ANC-led eThekwini to court and hold them accountable for non-compliance. What one can be sure of is that wherever there is an ANC-orchestrated mess, you will find the DA rebuilding and demanding accountability.

Mr M E DLAMINI (Maiden Speech): Hon Chairperson, Minister Barbara Creecy, Deputy Minister Maggie Sotyu, hon members, we gather here to engage in a crucial debate on the topic of marine living resources and their significance in our society. The ocean, with its vast expanse and rich biodiversity, holds immense potential and importance for our environment, economy, and overall well-being. It is imperative that we recognise the value of marine living resources and take appropriate measures to protect and utilise them sustainably.

In this speech, I will present arguments highlighting the importance of marine living resources and the need for responsible management. First and foremost, marine living resources play a vital role in maintaining ecological balance and biodiversity. The oceans are home to a diverse array of

species, from microscopic plankton to majestic whales. These species form intricate food webs and ecosystems that support life on our planet.

By protecting and preserving marine living resources, we ensure the survival of numerous species and maintain the delicate balance of nature. Furthermore, marine living resources have substantial economic value. The oceans provide a multitude of resources that contribute to various industries, including fisheries, tourism and pharmaceuticals.

Fisheries, in particular, are a significant source of employment and livelihood for millions of people worldwide. By responsibly managing marine living resources, we can ensure the sustainability of fisheries, support coastal communities and create job opportunities. In addition to economic benefits, marine living resources also offer immense potential for scientific research and innovation. The oceans contain a treasure trove of yet-to-be-discovered species and natural compounds that hold promise for medical advancements, renewable energy sources, and technological breakthroughs.

By investing in research and exploration, we can unlock the untapped potential of marine living resources and drive innovation in diverse fields. However, despite the undeniable importance of marine living resources, they are currently facing numerous threats. Overfishing, habitat destruction, pollution, and climate change pose significant risks to the health and sustainability of our oceans.

Irresponsible exploitation of marine resources can lead to the depletion of fish stocks, irreversible damage to marine ecosystems, and negative socioeconomic impacts on coastal communities. It is imperative that we address these challenges and adopt sustainable practices to ensure the long-term viability of marine living resources.

To achieve this, we must prioritize effective marine resource management strategies. This includes implementing science- based fisheries management plans, establishing marine protected areas, and promoting sustainable fishing practices. Collaborative efforts among governments, scientists, industries, and local communities are essential for developing and implementing these strategies. By working together, we can

strike a balance between conservation and utilisation, ensuring that future generations can also benefit from the Abundance of marine living resources.

Education and awareness are also key components of responsible marine resource management. We must educate the public about the importance of marine ecosystems, the impacts of human activities, and the need for Sustainable practices. By fostering a sense of stewardship and environmental consciousness, we can inspire individuals to make informed choices and actively participate in the protection of marine living resources.

In conclusion, the preservation and sustainable utilisation marine living resources are of paramount importance to our environment, economy, and future generations. We must recognise the ecological, economic, and scientific value they hold and take decisive actions to ensure their protection. By adopting responsible management practices, fostering collaboration, and raising awareness, we can safeguard the oceans’ biodiversity and secure a prosperous future for ourselves and the generations to come. I thank you, Chairperson. [Applause.]

Mr A M SHAIK EMAM: Chairperson, allow me to welcome the presentation by the department despite the audit opinion and reports. We can confirm that, of course, the depart is moving in a positive direction. But allow me to draw the attention of this House to the situation in Palestine where 2,5 million trees were uprooted. One million of these were olive trees that Palestinians ... [Recording stopped.] ... will support oppresees or be part of the oppressors’ society.

One of the issues that I want to raise is the issue of high vacancy rate but ... [Recoding stopped.] ... to be a serious problem for us. I thin KwaZulu-Natal appears to be the main culprits for those who are not in compliance. Regarding waste management which, I think my colleagues has raised concern, I want to also say that I had an opportunity the other day ... [Recording stopped.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon members, let’s just be patient.

Mr A M SHAIK EMAM: ... throw sweet papers outside your window because of the clean conditions I found.

On the contrary, if you look at eThekwini and if you can look at the pollution that has been caused there that call high level which is extremely high and the health risks to the community of eThekwini, I want to urge the Minister and her team ... [recording stopped.] ... City of eThekwini. It is in shocking and deplorable conditions. I had an opportunity of speaking to some of the ... [Recording stopped.] ... that did not even exist that don’t exist anymore. So, I think a lot of work need to be done particularly in some of these metros.

Look at the quality of water that people are relying and dependent at, at eThekwini all the time. I see that the University of KwaZulu Natal, UKZN, has now through their website going to provide information on the quality of water. So, people can go in there. But not everybody has the luxury of be able to ... [Inaudible.] whether the quality of water has improved.

On the issue of small-scale fishing, ye, work is being done but we believe that a lot more need to be done. The question is why is international fishing companies are being given priority to local fishing companies? If you heard some of our small-scale fishers complaining that even snook which is

common in the Western Cape they cannot get it at the shore because these big companies go further in and prevent it from going closer to the shore. These are some of the problems that they seem to have.

In as far as the forestry ... [Time expired.] The NFP support this Budget Vote. Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon members, we apologise for the connectivity issues. That is why we invite hon members to be in the Chamber when their debates take place so that everybody can have an opportunity to listen to their debate.

Ms T V B MCHUNU: Hon Chairperson, Minister Barbara Creecy, Deputy Minister Maggie Sotyu, chairperson of the portfolio committee hon Modise and hon members, in our policy guide document adopted in 1992 we had stated that we must use our environment in a careful and planned way so that all people can benefit from it now and in the future. The ANC to its convictions that indeed we are *Ready to Govern* emphasise the right to a safe and a healthy environment for all South Africans through sustainable development, equitable resource

access, public participation and international co-operation. As the AN, our environmental policy continues to support conservation, safe living conditions and responsible waste management while integrating environmental principles across policies and collaborating globally for sustainable development.

In rising to support Budget 32, the ANC recognises the importance of policy consistency while acknowledging new policy challenges as result of our ever evolving nature of our society and the international al systems. One of the important policy aspect that require our attention and resolve, is waste management and relying the oceans economy and just energy transition, biodiversity and wild life. These areas demand our immediate attention and careful consideration to ensure a sustainable and prosperous future for South Africa.

The ANC has long recognised the importance of waste management and recycling, particularly when it comes to metals, plastics, rubber and paper and understand that by encouraging waste relying practices we can significantly reduce energy consumption in metal production and fabrication. By improving on our waste management this will lead in an increased in the

diversion of waste from land fields especially in many instances where local municipalities are beginning experience challenges in terms of finding land for the development of new land field sites.

We call on for the promotion of the recycling industry especially metals while limiting the export of scrap metal. By prioritising the development of compliant land field sites we acknowledge that this responsibility lies largely with local governments. However, we can recognise the needs for a comprehensive review of the Waste Act as highlighted in the ANC’s national executive committee, NEC, legotla in 2021. This review will ensure that our waste management policies align with our sustainability goals and provide the necessary framework for a cleaner and greener South Africa.

On the oceans economy we firmly believe in expanding participation in this vital sector. The ANC recognizes the immerse potential in the fishery sector holds in creating job opportunities and improving livelihoods particularly for our economically marginalised subsistence fishing. Communities.

We recognise the importance of the finalisation of the fishing rights and licenses and the development of robust marine policy that prioritise the use of South African ships in our trade with the rest of the world. By so doing we are not only protecting our marine resources, but also boost our national economy and secure the future for those dependent on the ocean for sustenance.

Furthermore, the just energy transition is a cornerstone of our commitment to a sustainable future. The ANC wholeheartedly embrace the Paris Agreement and the target of achieving net- zero carbon emissions by 2050. To achieve this ambitious goal, we recognise the need for increased investment in renewable energy. By supporting the Green Economy Accord, we strive to boost demand on the renewable sector stimulating economic growth while simultaneously mitigating climate change.

However, we also acknowledge the challenges posed by unfunded programmes on climate change mitigations. It is imperative that we prioritise allocating sufficient resources to these programmes to ensure their effective implementation.

In pursuit of the just transition we cannot neglect the importance of education and awareness programmes particularly

in rural communities. As we transition from coal to clean energy sources it is imperative as President Ramaphosa had said to ensure that we leave no one behind. this can be best achieved through a social compact.

This Vote recognises the immerse, the value and potential of our rich biodiversity. The budget allocation sector alone employs approximately 400 000 individuals. Over the past years we noted the decline in job opportunities created through the Expanded Public Works Programme, EPWP, and in this financial year over 106 958 job opportunities will be created and most important through infrastructure-led programmes. This is in line with economic reconstruction and recovery plan of the government.

On Chairperson, let me site just one important issue of how the ANC-led municipality is intervening in these issues of just transition. In a municipality led by the ANC called Mpofana Local Municipality led by the mayor Maureen Magubane, a team of MLS energy technician, which is a company owned by three young ladies who are graduates of photovoltaic, PVC, green cut programme. They are currently in a process of building a solar plant, a 20 megawatt solar plant that will

provide for that municipality in that area. They have done it previously in Ezemvelo where they installed a 40 kilowatt battery bank for Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife.

In conclusion, as we support this Budget Vote as the ANC, we wish to indicate to the South Africans that indeed the opposition that are rejecting this Vote are rejecting that small fisheries, EPWP job creation and biodiversity be given advantage and services. South Africans must know that the poorly and the previously disadvantaged communities are not represented by the opposition that is rejecting this budget because it means they are saying those communities must not be provided with the services. [Time expired.] Thank you, Chairperson.

Mr M NYHONTSO: Hon House Chair, where I am I have serious challenges. Let me not waste time and say PAC supports this budget. Thank you, House Chair.

Mr D W BRYANT: In his expose *Landscapes of Fear*, the investigative journalist, Julian Rademeyer, has revealed in detail, the criminal syndicates controlling rhino poaching and the illegal wildlife trade from South Africa to China. These

syndicates are directly connected to Mpumulanga’s murky underworld which has been emboldened over many years by ANC- led state capture, and is characterised by ruthless assassins, cash-in-transit gangs, coal mafias and territorial rulers.

Kruger National Park’s rhinos have been decimated by 75% by these syndicates since 2009, 82 vital game ranger posts remain unfilled in Kruger Park and this budget only provides enough money to fill a handful of them. Our wild rhinos are destined for extinction if we do not provide enough boots on the ground as soon as possible to take on the poachers. Our endangered pangolin, abalone and succulents are also being targeted and being smuggled to China, and more must be done to increase the pressure to curtail the domestic Chinese markets. I am glad to hear about the National Integrated Strategy to Combat Wildlife Trafficking, and I do hope that this is a success.

There is growing evidence from groups such as the Southern Ocean Coalition of alleged Russian prospecting for gas in the Antarctic. This goes directly against decades old international treaties signed by both South Africa and Russia. However, the ANC claims to know nothing about these activities, and continues to proudly host Russian Antarctic

research vessels in its ports. As we know, these aren’t the only Russian ships it has been hosting.

Many of our traditional fisherfolk have lost their businesses and some have even been forced to sell their boats and small factories as a result of the drawn out and overly bureaucratic fishing rights allocation process. This process has been the most secretive and opaque since rights were allocated in a democratic South Africa.

This ANC-led government, through the Fishing Rights Allocation Process, FRAP, has unfortunately severely compromised members of traditional fishing communities, particularly those in the Western Cape. Now we are told that the ANC wants to go further by destroying Coloured and Indian businesses by forcing racial quotas upon them in the fishing industry in some provinces via the racist Employment Equity Amendment Act Regulations.

The ANC should not be awarding fishing rights to anyone who is simply going to use those rights to dispense patronage or sell the rights off to the highest bidder, but the allocations in the tuna pole sector reveal that many fishers have been excluded and paper quota holders brought in. A portion of the

squid rights from the commercial sector were even assigned to the small-scale co-ops just to inevitably be sold back to the commercial sector. This is not empowerment.

This government should be growing our local fishing businesses and increasing employment in the sector and no genuine fishing community should be shut out simply because of the colour of their skin. It is a scandal that this is even being contemplated.

We would urge the Minister to listen to the desperate pleas of traditional fisherfolk during the final phases of the appeals process as this is really their last chance to recover their businesses and their dignity. As we know, the mess of the small-scale fishing process in the Western Cape was only resolved after the Minister was forced to take her own department to court, but we still do not know whether the service provider responsible for screwing up the initial process has even been blacklisted by government. Furthermore, the public needs to know who really stands to benefit from the small-scale process and how much influence certain connected local ANC cadres will have in the local fishing co-operatives.

It is clear that centralised ANC control over the granting of fishing rights is destroying the industry. The fisherfolk of this country will be far better served if the Minister exercises her authority in terms of section 78 of the Marine Living Resources Act and devolves the responsibility for the granting of certain fishing rights to competent local authorities, such as in the DA-led Western Cape.

We acknowledge that some steps have been taken towards addressing issues within DFFE’s entities, but it often seems like one step forward and two steps back. After recovering from the impact of COVID and increasing its visitor footfall, the South African National Biodiversity Institute, SANBI, has taken the bizarre decision, during a closed-door negotiation, to cancel a longstanding free entry agreement for members of the 110-year-old Botanical Society, BotSoc. This will decimate BotSoc’s membership, and one can only conclude that there is some sort of an intention to collapse BotSoc at the expense of our botanical gardens.

As South Africa moves towards a moonshot coalition government in 2024, it is essential that we protect our precious environment for generations to come. The DA is already doing

this where we govern, and we will continue to do so as the leader of a new national government in 2024. Thank you.

Ms N GANTSHO: Hon House Chairperson, hon Minister, Barbara Creecy, Deputy Minister, Mme Maggie Sotyu, hon chairperson of the portfolio committee, hon Modise, and hon members, good morning.

Hon House Chairperson, in support of this Budget Vote 32 I would like to emphasise the immense significance of the allocation of R9,87 billion of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment, DFFE. This allocation is not only crucial for their work in protecting the environment and promoting sustainable resource use, but also for effectively addressing and mitigating the impacts of climate disasters in South Africa.

In 2021 the ANC noted the challenges around unfunded and unplanned expenditure and impacts arising out of disasters and climate change. Our beloved country has witnessed the devastating consequences of climate disasters such as floods, droughts, heatwaves and storms. These calamities have resulted

in the loss of precious lives, the destruction of vital infrastructure and economic hardships for many communities.

It is utmost important that we take swift and decisive action to reduce the impact of these disasters and build resilience in our nation. Our Climate Change Bill, the one that you are questioning hon Paulsen, you will see how it is going to assist on these disasters and you know that. So, our Climate Change Bill that is currently undergoing processes of public hearings and our National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy should look into the assessment of our country’s vulnerability to climate change and the related risks at sectoral, cross- sectoral and geographic level, including a consideration of relevant national disasters risk assessment in terms of the Disaster Management Act.

Hon House Chairperson, the allocation of the budget to DFFE will provide much needed resources to enable our level preparedness and response efforts. The allocation of almost R2,1 billion over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, MTEF, is an investment in a state of art early warning system and cutting-edge weather forecasting technologies. With accurate and timely information, we can alert our communities in

advance, enabling them to evacuate safely and take the necessary precautions to minimise harm.

We express our satisfaction with the allocation of nearly

R2 billion to South African National Parks, SANParks, over the medium-term. We would like to underscore the significant contribution that our parks make in the growth of our economy, their role in promoting tourism and their crucial function in conserving and protecting our environment.

Our strategy as the ANC is to guard, through legislation and policies, against the threat to biodiversity and this receives priority in this Vote 32. South African Biodiversity Institute with its resource allocation will expand its conservation efforts, engage local communities in sustainable practices and ensure the long-term survival of our unique plant and animal species.

Hon House Chairperson, Isimangaliso Wetland Park Authority has, over the past financial year, made progress in achieving its objectives and performance indicators, and has successfully treated invasive alien plants, rehabilitated wetlands, engaged people in skills development as part of our

skills revolutionary agenda, created job opportunities, raised its revenue and attracted visitors to the park. The authority’s focus on conserving the environment, monitoring compliance with governing legislations and promoting biodiversity conservation aligns with its mandate to protect and maintain the parks’ world heritage status. The allocation of resources to the different programmes reflects the Isimangaliso priorities with significant investment in administration and biodiversity conservation.

Hon House Chair, the Marine Living Resources Fund, MLRF, aims to create a total of 4 500 job opportunities over the medium- term through the Working for Fisheries Programme, WFFP. The allocation to the Marine Living Resources will assist in executing programmes that ensure the long-term viability of our marine resources, sustain various fishing sectors and preserve the delicate balance of our coastal ecosystem.

Moreover, it supports ecotourism initiatives, creating opportunities for local communities and promoting the appreciation and conservation of our marine heritage.

The allocation will have a positive impact to the MLRF on conservation, economic development, food security,

biodiversity, climate change adaptation, scientific research and collaboration in the marine sector.

The budget allocation of R9,87 billion to the department holds tremendous potential to safeguard our environment, to promote sustainable resource use, and build resilience in the face of climate disasters by investing in preparedness response mechanism and collaboration with institutions like SANParks, South African Weather Service, Saws, Isimangaliso Wetland Park, MLRF and SANBI we can protect our communities, preserve our natural heritage and secure our sustainable future for generations to come.

I emphasise the ANC’s support for this Budget Vote allocation and urge all esteemed members to do the same. Let us come together recognising the urgency of this and make a resounding commitment to the protection of our environment and the wellbeing of our people.

Hon Paulsen, I was very surprised when you questioned the speed at which we are moving when it comes to the Climate Change Bill. As I have mentioned earlier, you know that our people are affected badly and severely by climate change. Hon

Winkler, I thought you knew that sewerage does not fall under this department, but falls under municipalities and under the Department of Water and Sanitation. I was really surprised when you raised that here. Hon Bryant, we will continue to lead because we are the choice of the people of South Africa. Thank you, House Chairperson.

The MINISTER FISHERIES, FORESTERY AND THE ENVIRONMENT: Thank

you very much, hon House Chair, and hon members, for the support that we have received, and also for the interesting points that have been raised during this debate. I agree with you, hon Weber, provinces and municipalities must implement conditions for keeping of predators in captivity. My own view is that it should be ... [Inaudible.] ... registered people keep lions and tigers in an urban area. That process is undergoing, there’s consultation now. With regards to the Threatened or Protected Species, Tops, Regulations, these were regulations I’ve found, and I took extensive discussion on them. I was told that they were better than what we have now. The last time there was public consultation it was 2016, rather than going through an extended court process. I think hon members have spoken about the situation wherein with regards to hunting where the appeal just never gets back on

the court order. I thought that let’s just do the 30 days and then we can move on.

Let me say to hon Paulsen that I really like the Andries Tatane clean-up campaign. It’s an excellent initiative and long ... [Inaudible.] at last. Let me also say that we hope that now you’re in coalition in a range of the metros that you will, indeed, improve waste collection and will be watching that very keenly. There is, hon member, a roadblock outside where ... [Inaudible.] having looking you a bit for the abalone that you told us was there. I think that a few members have raised the issue of land for compliance, and we have now moved towards a situation where we brought together the cities around the top 40 landfills in the country in order of volume. Therefore, the purpose of this is to enhance compliance in those landfills to try and sort out the pricing of landfilling as opposed to recycling into crowd in private sector investment both into recycling and also into landfilling, and one of the associated projects there that we are having look at is this City of Johannesburg waste-to-energy project, which I think if it can deal with some of the issues would, indeed, be an interesting pilot project.

Hon members, I am concerned about the capacity of provincial conservation authorities. I’m particularly concerned about the difficulties that these authorities are having in filling scientific posts and conservation posts because managing conservation areas is not just about patrolling. It’s also about ensuring that correct conservation practices are taking place. I think we all know that provincial governments are under severe financial pressures. Therefore, I have spoken to the Public Service Commission about my concerns about the lack of filling of scientific posts both within provincial conservation ... [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon members, I have requested the information and communications technology, ICT, team to immediately disconnect those who just switch on their microwave and stop in disrupting proceeding. Therefore, let us

... order, the microphone. Thank you.

The MINISTER FISHERIES, FORESTERY AND THE ENVIRONMENT: Yes,

there’s no microwave in this debate.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Please, proceed, hon Minister. Thank you.

The MINISTER FISHERIES, FORESTERY AND THE ENVIRONMENT: Thank

you very much, hon House Chair. I was saying that I have raised with the Public Service Commission my concern that scientific and conservation posts both within provincial departments and provincial agencies are not regarded as co- posts and fall by the wayside when provinces are having to constrain their finances, and this is a serious problem.

Thank you, hon Singh, for your kind words. With regard, hon members, to the captive line breeding industry, I think that what we have to start off with is giving the industry a chance to voluntarily exit and to understand what the implications are with regards to the lions themselves, the workers in those industries and the owners of those industries. I’ve indicated to you that it is still my intention before the end of this term to pass the policy document which we suspended while we were bringing in the White Paper. I don’t want to talk about

... [Inaudible.] power I’m the appeal authority. However, for those of you who are interested there was quite an interesting document in *Business Day* the other day where there was an interview with the owners, and I found that most didn’t like me because I stay away from this issue because I’m the appeal authority.

Let me say, hon Winkler, that I’m not the Minister of Water and Sanitation. Therefore, I understand that you must have a stick to beat me and then not many sticks available.

Therefore, you want to beat me for something I’m not responsible for. I fully understand that that’s your job, and you earn money being a member of the opposition. However, let me say ... [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Faber, why are you rising? Hon Minister, can you just give me an opportunity to listen to the hon member.

Mr W F FABER: Hon House Chair, if I may use the microwave and perhaps just ask if the Minister will take a question, please.

The MINISTER FISHERIES, FORESTERY AND THE ENVIRONMENT: No, not

now you’ve had your chance. However, what I can say to you with regards to my regulatory role is that there are tens of municipalities where we have issued notices. In eThekwini situation we are working with those who have already taken the municipality to court. I don’t remember whether they in or out of the moonshot packed, but you are late on this one, colleagues. However, what I’m pleased to announce in this

House is Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Cogta, has now given the city of eThekwini R1,5 billion and I think that’s going to go a long way to fixing those pump stations which have created all the problems that we’ve had.

Yes, let me talk about the cheetahs. I’ve actually got on my phone photos of the cites permits and the passports that all of those cheetahs have. If you have other evidence, bring it to me and I will investigate it, I don’t have a problem with that. Hon members, we desperately need the Climate Change Bill, and we need the Climate Change Bill because without it we have no regulatory mechanism to ensure that municipalities and provinces budget for climate change adaptation. And that is why we have been asking you on a regular basis to please assist us so that this Bill should be passed timeously and should go to the NCOP for consideration before the end of this term.

On fishing, I think hon Dlamini did a wonderful job demolishing you, hon Paulsen, because what he explained is that ... [Interjections.] ... in terms of ensuring that we get more fisherman in the system by the low levels of the stock that has been depleted over many years of fishing. Hon

members, climate change biodiversity loss and pollution are the greatest issues of our time, and they pose a threat to the future of humanity. I ask you to join with us in combating those threats and ensuring that all of us have a sustainable future for our children and our grandchildren. Thank you very much.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Thank you, hon Minister. Hon members, that concludes the debate and the business of the mini-plenary. The mini-plenary we will now rise. Thank you.

Debate concluded.

The mini-plenary session rose at 11:50.