



forestry, fisheries & the environment

Department:
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

(For written reply)

QUESTION NO. 23 {NW23E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 1 of 2023

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Mr D W Bryant (DA) to ask the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:

- (1) Whether, with reference to her recent trip to Antarctica, there is any collaboration between the South African Antarctic teams, scientists and those involved in Russian expeditions to Antarctica; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what is the extent of the collaboration and/or support;
- (2) whether her trip included discussions regarding the ongoing seabed prospecting by Russia, including extensive seismic blasting along the east coast of Antarctica; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (3) whether the refuelling and servicing of Russian Antarctic-bound vessels by the Republic will be reconsidered, taking into account the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?


23. THE MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPLIES:

- 1) Over the years, the Republic of South Africa and the Russian Federation have signed different Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with respect to the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS) activities and science in general. These MOUs were signed and managed under two departments, namely the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) and the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI). This separation is informed by the different mandates of the two departments. With specific reference to the DFFE, the MOU is signed between the Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute (AARI) of the Russian Federal Service for Hydrometeorology (Roshydromet) and Environmental Monitoring, and the South African National Antarctic Programme (SANAP).

The main objectives of this MOU are to –

- coordinate cooperation in scientific research between the two Parties, as well as logistical and related support activities between their respective national Antarctic programmes as succinctly elucidated in this MOU; and
 - facilitate cooperation with regard to logistical and related support activities. The two Parties submit that for these activities, additional arrangements may be instituted as deemed necessary.
- 2) The DFFE is not aware of any prospecting or seismic blasting along the east coast of Antarctica. In accordance with Article 7 of the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic, any activity relating to mineral resources, other than scientific research, are absolutely prohibited. This includes a ban on all commercial mining up to and including the year 2048. However, it is critically important to note that currently, measures to reinforce international efforts through relevant and proactive interaction between government and legislative bodies are being explored to extend the ban on commercial mining beyond 2048. As an original Contracting Party (CP) to the ATS, South Africa does not only support all those efforts, but is an active participant in finding a lasting solution.
 - 3) Anchorage, pilotage, berthing facilities and bunkering services all fall under port services. All commercial ports in South Africa, of which the Port of Cape Town is one, are owned and operated by the Transnet National Ports Authority (TNPA), which is part of the Transnet Group. Therefore, the economic transaction between the TNPA and the agents of the vessels could be

better responded to by the TNPA under the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE). Issues of safety of navigation to our ports and the process of calling into our ports can best be responded to by the Department of Transport (DoT) and its agency, namely the South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA).



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MS B D CREECY, MP
MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

DATE: 21/2/2023