**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 276 / NW281E**

**MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES:**

**Ms D Carter (Cope) to ask the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries:**

**QUESTION**

(1)  Whether his department has any models of the long-term impact of climate change and altered rainfall patterns in various parts of South Africa;

(2) Whether his department is using the specified models to inform the agricultural sector of the changes they needed to effect and the strategies they needed to employ to remain economically viable; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;

(3) Whether he will make a statement on recorded high temperatures in South Africa

between 1 December 2015 and 15 February 2016;

(4) Whether the department is sufficiently responsive to the likelihood of western South Africa becoming hotter and drier in the foreseeable future and what needed to be done to deal with an altered climate? NO. 276/NW281E

**REPLY**

(1) My department draws from models designed in collaboration academic and research institutions within the Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management fields. These institutions provide climate projections for long term adaptation and mitigation scenarios to assist the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) on the development of short – long term planning and strategies. Furthermore, the department in collaboration with the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) commissioned a research on “Sensitivity of crop suitability to climate change in South Africa” which addressed the potential shift of climate regions over South Africa and the potential shifts in crop production areas, driven by projected changes in temperature and rainfall.

The product of these models is disseminated on monthly basis to alert farmers on the seasonal forecast as well as suggested measures/strategies to prevent and mitigate against the impact of hazards and disasters under the auspices of the National Agro-meteorological Committee (NAC) chaired by DAFF. These contribute in the implementation of disaster risk management measures founded on prevention and mitigation as provided for under the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act No. 57 of 2002).

1. My department draws from models designed in collaboration academic and research institutions within the Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management fields. DAFF utilises the products of the models to advise the agricultural sector to plan ahead as well as the required measures in their farming practices. Furthermore, the daily extreme weather warnings issued to the agricultural sector are aimed at assisting farmers to be prepared for the pending hazards on the short-term for prevention and mitigation to ensure minimal impact to the sector.
2. As stated on items 1 and 2 above, the department issues advisories and warning messages to the farming sector as received from expert agencies such as SAWS and the ARC. As you will recall, the press release issued by DAFF on 3 November 2015 already reported on heat waves that occurred in September and October 2015 and provided advice on mitigation measures. This press statement further indicated the expected above normal temperatures and farmers were advised to implement precautionary measures to mitigate the impact associated therewith. The NAC Advisories further emphasised these conditions on monthly basis including the provision of precautionary measures. The NAC meeting held on 17 February 2016 deliberated on the observed weather conditions including on the above average temperatures where provinces were further advised to encourage the farmers to implement precautionary measures to mitigate these conditions. The outcomes of this meeting will be circulated to all involved including to the farmer organisations.
3. The mandate on climate resides with the Minister of Environmental Affairs. My Department is a user department. The department’s response to climate change in terms of the Sector Plan alluded to above is geared at addressing climate change across the country in line with national, regional and international frameworks. Based on the long term prediction scenarios, DAFF developed Climate Change Sector Plan for the implementation of an effective climate change adaptation and mitigation programme for the sector in compliance with the National Climate Change Response White Paper (NCCRWP, 2012) and in conformity with the Disaster Risk Management system. Some provinces have also developed climate change plans for their local scenarios which further assist in addressing the negative impact of climate change.

Climate change is a cross cutting issue and affects us all hence the need for the involvement of all role players and relevant stakeholders.