

**Ref:02/1/5/2**

**MINISTER**

**QUESTION NO. 547 FOR WRITTEN REPLY: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

A draft reply to **Prof N M Khubisa (NFP)** to the above-mentioned question is enclosed for your consideration.

**MS ESTHER MAKAU**

**DIRECTOR-GENERAL (ACTING)**

**DATE:**

**DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED**

**MS N P MOKONYANE, MP**

**MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

**DATE:**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**(For written reply)**

**QUESTION NO. 547 {NW669E}**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 7 of 2019**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION: 08 March 2019**

**Prof N M Khubisa (NFP) to ask the Minister of Environmental Affairs:**

With reference to the climate change and constant changing weather conditions, particularly in the uMkhanyakude district and other rural communities where there have been reports of persons dying due to thunderstorms, what is her Department, together with the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, doing to deal with the situation?

**547. THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS REPLIES:**

South African Weather Service (SAWS) has a close and active relationship with South Africa’s disaster management structures at all levels. SAWS participates in the quarterly local, district and provincial disaster management forum meetings, which include, among others, the uMkhanyakude District Municipality. At these meetings a seven-day outlook on the expected weather is usually presented, as well as longer seasonal (one to three months) predictions. The last uMkhanyakude disaster meeting forum was held on 7 February 2019.

In addition, SAWS also conducts awareness campaigns in the rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal Province. SAWS also issues different categories of weather warnings in the province through different media platforms, including SMSs and radio, e.g. Ukhozi FM. The recent severe weather event on 23 February 2019 caused considerable hardship to the northern part of the Province. For this event, severe weather was foreseen using model predictions and weather radar observations; and warnings were issued to the media, including community radio stations, and through SMSs. This specific event is being investigated in detail as a special case study. In this manner SAWS is constantly improving its understanding of such storms and their impacts in order to improve its services and warnings.

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