



**“Dissolution or winding up of SANParks – a move towards Privatisation?”**  
by Andrew Wardle

Consider for a moment the full implications of the winding up or dissolution of SANParks... No more South African National Parks... I am of the view that this deserves more than a moments consideration.

On the face of it, this amendment is for tax purposes. But lets go a little deeper. What happens next? Who takes over from SANParks if they are 'wound up'? It seems to me that the next logical step would be the complete privatisation of SANParks. There are three stages to Privatisation. The first stage is Corporatisation. The second stage is Commercialisation and the third stage is Privatisation. SANParks are undoubtedly 'Commercialised' – both the 'Commercialisation Programme' (CP) and section 50 of the Protected Areas Act which allows '*any commercial activity so long as it is aimed at raising revenue*' confirms this.

What many people might not know is that the men responsible for implementing the Commercialisation Programme into SANParks – its CEO Mavuso Msimang, Head of Commercial Development Peter Fearnhead, and its Director of Conservation Dr Anthony Hall-Martin - founded African Parks Management and Finance Company (APMFC) shortly after adopting the Commercialisation Programme.

APMFC are a private company which seeks to privatise the management and control of National Parks throughout Africa by any means necessary including the eviction of more than 10 000 people from their land in Ethiopia, many through having their homes burnt down, in order to create Nech Sar National Park for APMFC to manage.

The relevance of this to the amendment is twofold. Firstly according to APMFC's 'vision and mission' they share '*objects similar to those of the South African National Parks*'. Secondly APMFC applied for 'Public Benefit Status' earlier this year, which is a move on their part towards gaining exemption from Income Tax payment. This means that APMFC are perfectly situated to benefit from this proposed amendment and take over from SANParks.

Whats more, Cyril Ramaphosa is now on the board of the APMFC. Cyril Ramaphosa, can be considered to be the 'father of Privatisation' when he signed a deal with the International Monetary Fund in 1993 on behalf of the ANC. This deal, which agreed to a 'Structural Adjustment Programme' (SAP), included 'conditionalities' like Privatisation. The Structural Adjustment Programme effectively turned its back on the Freedom Charter, which would have granted the people of this land 'economic freedom' - instead we have the highest prison population in Africa.

Further proof that Privatisation of SANParks is becoming a reality comes through the recent purchase by Dubai World of the Jock Safari Lodge concession in the Kruger National Park. Dubai World recently took over the management of Akagera National Park in Rwanda. There would be little to stop them making an 'unsolicited bid' for taking over the management of Kruger National Park if this amendment were to go through in its present form.

**SUGGESTIONS:**

- 1) **The winding up or dissolution of SANParks be comprehensively examined** - this examination must include all the possible implications of SANParks 'winding up'. For example: what will happen to the land and sea of the Parks themselves? Are these to be included in the 'Assets' of SANParks? If this investigation has already been undertaken then the documentation relating to it must be made publicly available;
- 2) **'res extra commercium' - 'certain property is not capable of being privately owned'**. Regardless of the outcome of the above mentioned investigation, the land and sea of the National Parks themselves must always remain the property of South Africa's people.