



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

COMMITTEES

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URGENT

10 May 2012

Mr Charel De Beer, MP
Chairperson
Select Committee on Finance

Dear Hon De Beer,

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PUBLIC HEARINGS OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS RELATING TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WHITE PAPER ON CLIMATE CHANGE: 4-8 JUNE 2012

As you are aware, Government captured an overarching policy framework in which to meet its international and national responsibilities and commitments relating to Climate Change, within the National Climate Change Response Policy (NCCRP), which was approved by Cabinet, as a White Paper, on 19 October 2011 (Gazette No. 34695, Notice No. 757). (herein referred to as WPCC). The White Paper represents the culmination of an interactive and participatory 6-year long policy development process that was started in October 2005 and that involved ground-breaking modeling and research activities, two national conferences, numerous workshops and conferences in every province, a myriad of bilateral and key stakeholder engagements, a NEDLAC review and Parliamentary hearings on the Green and White Papers.

The Portfolio Committee on Water and Environmental Affairs (the Committee), in November 2011, concluded public hearings on the policy framework contained in the WPCC and its implementation challenges, within days of the policy being approved by Cabinet. The Committee is of the opinion, after hearing a wide variety of opinions and stakeholders, that there seemingly exists broad consensus in our society on the principles underpinning this Climate Change policy framework. However, a myriad of concerns were raised about the likely challenges that would arise in the implementation of the proposed policy intentions in the White Paper, as some policy intentions require an integrated and coordinated approach involving cohorts of Government Departments to ensure their effective operationalisation and

holistic implementation; whilst at the same time many Departments had to realign some of their policies, strategic objectives and operations to give effect to this overarching policy framework. The Committee holds the same view.

To further complicate future challenges with the implementation of the WPCC, the Committee noted that, in the main, the WPCC consists more of an overarching policy framework for all the policies of each Department on which Climate Change impacts, rather than detailed policies for each such Department. It was further noted that the Department of Environmental Affairs (the Department) is the lead Department for the overall, overarching policy framework, but the policies of each Department relating to our response to Climate Change remains the responsibility and mandate of each Department, within the overall policy framework.

The Committee, therefore, regards the adoption of the WPCC as only the beginning (and not the end) of our nations response to Climate Change. Therefore, Parliament will, in future, have to oversee the development and implementation of the National Climate Change Response Policy through the relevant Portfolio Committees, in particular the Committees on Water and Environmental Affairs, Energy, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Trade and Industry, Economic Development, Mining, Science and Technology, Finance, COGTA, Rural Development and Land Affairs, Transport and Human Settlements. In this regard, consideration will have to be given to the creation of mechanisms, comprising the relevant Portfolio Committees to coordinate and oversee the implementation of the WPCC. To this end, the Committee, as the lead committee (equivalent to our Department within the Executive) has decided to hold at least one weeklong meeting in each half of the year, to engage our Department and all other relevant Departments/Agencies on progress with the implementation of the policy framework. The first oversight meeting is planned for the committee week in the first week of June, from 4-8 June 2012.

The Committee is in the process of finalising the programme with our Department. We intend commencing with the overarching and integrated matters and then too engage with each Department separately. The Departments we view as being most impacted upon by Climate Change and, therefore, the WPCC, are: Environmental Affairs, Water Affairs, Finance, Economic Development, Energy, Transport, Mining, Trade and Industry, Rural Development and Land Affairs, COGTA, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Science and Technology and Human Settlements. **We hope to meet with the individual Departments from Wednesday**

afternoon 6 June until Friday 8 June 2012. We would want each Department to prepare and present a 30 minute presentation on the challenges it faces in respect of the impact of Climate Change NOW and into the FUTURE and their proposed responses: including all aspects of the WPCC applicable to that Department, especially how they intend to implement or operationalise those relevant policy provisions dealing specifically with that Department or entity, like Flagship programmes; and all legislative, regulatory, policy, strategic objectives and programmes which will have to be reviewed, amended or aligned with the policy framework contained in the WPCC (with proposed timeframes).

Some of the issues or tasks the Committee has identified in the WPCC which requires immediate attention and implementation, and which will be dealt with during the hearings, are:

- Setting up the Intergovernmental Committee on Climate Change (IGCCC) sub-structures;
- Implementing the flagship programmes;
- The identification and prioritisation of key short and medium term adaptation interventions that must be addressed in sector plans and the identification of adaptation responses that require coordination between specific sectors and/or departments;
- Defining desired emission reduction outcomes and/or carbon budgets for each significant sector or sub-sector of the economy based on an in-depth assessment of the mitigation potential, best available mitigation options, available evidence, science, and a full assessment of the costs and benefits;
- Reviewing/auditing and revising key sectoral implementation plans to ensure alignment with the climate change policy and specifically the identified desired mitigation outcomes and/or carbon budgets and adaptation priorities;
- The National Atmospheric Emission Inventory, including greenhouse gasses (GHG's), a component of the South African Air Quality Information System, must be developed, tested and commissioned; and
- Designing and publishing a draft Climate Change Response Monitoring and Evaluation System; and
- Appointing a multi-stakeholder climate financing working group.

The Committee, will obviously, be inviting all the relevant Portfolio Committee's to participate in these oversight public hearings, for the whole week or at least when their Department is appearing. Each Committee will decide its own level of participation depending on their work programme.

In conclusion, as appears from the aforesaid, the Committee, intends to ensure the implementation of the WPCC, by at least bi-annually meeting as a collective of Portfolio Committees, to engage with overarching, integrated and coordinating issues in the WPCC; whilst during the rest of the year, each relevant Portfolio Committee, will have to review each policy and piece of legislation, which falls within its mandate, to determine whether it complies with the legal requirements to support the effective and efficient implementation of the institutional and regulatory arrangements proposed in the WPCC, and to continuously ensure policy and legislative alignment with the Climate Change policy framework.

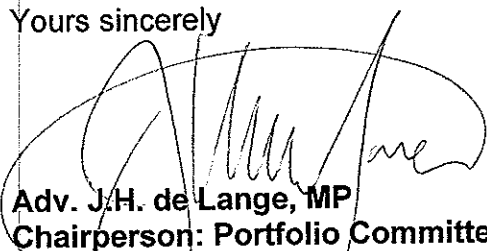
It is in this context that the Committee invites all those Government Departments and public entities whose activities are impacted upon by Climate Change and the content of the WPCC, to come to Parliament to participate in these proposed public hearings. The proposed final programme will follow in due course.

The Steering Committee on Climate Change in Parliament has endorsed the Committee's approach to this matter.

Please confirm attendance with the Committee Secretary, Ms Tyhileka Madubela, on 021 403 3713 or 083 304 9586 or email tmadubela@parliament.gov.za

Your participation will be highly valued and appreciated.

Yours sincerely



Adv. J.H. de Lange, MP
Chairperson: Portfolio Committee on Water and Environmental Affairs