

## **Minister Edna Molewa delivers 2014/15 Budget Vote Policy Statement for the Department of Environmental Affairs at National Council of Provinces, Parliament**

22 Jul 2014

Honourable Chairperson of the NCOP;  
Honourable Chairperson of the Select Committee;  
Honourable Members of the NCOP;  
Honourable Members of Parliament;  
Distinguished guests;  
Ladies and gentlemen;  
Introduction

Today, we consider the budget, programmes and priorities of the Environmental Affairs vote for 2014/15. This budget reflects the clear mandate given by South Africans to implement the ruling party's policies.

### **Sustainable Development and the Green Economy**

South Africa has developed a National Development Plan (or NDP) to address our need to develop our economy along an internationally competitive, job creating, sustainable, climate resilient and low carbon development path. All the while recognising that South Africa's natural capital, in the form of ecosystems, biodiversity and other natural resources, is a critical foundation to unlocking and boosting socio-economic growth and ensuring the long-term wellbeing of society.

We have introduced legislative amendments in order to develop an integrated environmental regulatory system. Among these are amendments to the National Environmental Management, Waste, Air Quality Management and Water Services Acts.

In addition, the National Environmental Management Act now includes environmental authorisation for mining developments. Accordingly, the Minister of Mineral Resources will now issue mining related environmental impact assessment and waste license authorisations – with the Minister of Environment being an Appeals Authority on mining related environmental authorisations.

The cooperative governance arrangement also aligns the simultaneous processing of air emission and water use licenses for mining activities.

Further regulations are being developed and will be published in the next financial year.

### **Green Economy**

Our green economy strategy comprises eight key pillars, namely; green buildings and built environment; sustainable transport and infrastructure; clean energy and energy efficiency; resource conservation and management; sustainable waste management; water management; sustainable consumption and production; and agriculture food production and forestry.

Financing remains a key challenge to implementation. Our national Green Fund is one example of an innovative approach with which we have made great strides. To date 22 multi-year green economy projects and 16 research and technology related projects valued at R572 million have been implemented.

We are working at growing existing green sectors or industries that at the same time maximise job creation co-benefits. Through the Expanded Public Works culture and environment programme we are working on expanding job creation in the medium term.

I would now like to address efforts towards realising our constitutional mandate to protect and manage environmental degradation, environmental impacts and environmental health threats and risks.

### **Air Quality and Climate Change**

Air pollution is recognised as a very serious health hazard. Industry must reduce its emissions. Government must enforce minimum emission standards, and monitor air quality. Activist organisations must continue to raise the alarm, when necessary.

The introduction of new air quality legislation in South Africa is just one of the many instruments we are using to ensure every citizen's right to air quality. We have come a long way in a relatively short period of time, largely the result of collaboration between all three spheres of government and with key stakeholders and partners.

The National Environmental Management: Air Quality Act, which came into effect in 2010, represents a paradigm shift: it offers an integrated approach to reduce the impact of multiple sources of pollution, instead of focusing only on what comes out of individual stacks.

Priority areas have been declared: including in the Vaal Triangle, the Highveld, and in the Waterberg, where ambient air quality standards are currently being exceeded or may be exceeded.

Through 102 government-owned air-quality monitoring stations countrywide we are continuously monitoring compliance. They continuously send data to the South African Air Quality Information System (SAAQIS) managed by the South African Weather Services – enabling members of the public to monitor air quality in their respective areas.

The South African Weather Service plays a significant role in accessing the public to critical weather information that impacts lives, livelihoods and businesses.

The effects of severe weather events across various parts of the country earlier this year were well anticipated by SAWS alerting Disaster Management Centres.

Through this budget endorsement, these systems are able to be maintained and enhanced – resulting in greater accuracy and reliability.

Our National Climate Change Response Policy is aimed at building social, economic and environmental resilience to the impacts of climate change, and making a fair contribution to the global effort to stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations.

To ensure our country's food, water, energy and infrastructure security is not negatively impacted by climate change we have developed Long Term Adaptation Scenarios to inform adaptation planning and implementation.

The Let's Respond Toolkit is a guideline for incorporating climate change in integrated development plans and building effective community climate change responses. We are working with SALGA to raise awareness.

Waste and Chemicals

As populations expand, the generation of waste is unavoidable; a situation exacerbated by technological advancement and consumerism.

South Africa generated 108 million tonnes of waste in 2011. Gauteng province contributes about 45% of the total waste generated in the country.

It is imperative for us to introduce innovative approaches in dealing with waste particularly focusing on diverting waste from landfill disposal to other waste management options.

The National Waste Management Act and National Waste Management Strategy entrenches the universal waste management principles of Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Recover.

I am pleased to announce that the NEM: Waste Amendment Act, 2014 - in effect since the 2 June 2014 - establishes an economic basis for viable recycling. It apportions sufficient value to waste to facilitate demand for recyclables- thereby producing more jobs and enterprise development.

Recycling has been valued at a contribution of as much as R50 billion to the South African economy. In effect, waste will now be a renewable resource and not something to throw away.

We began with plastic bags in 2002 and initiated a national waste tyre plan last year. The tyre plan alone will create more than 10 000 jobs within the next 2 years. Going forward, we will prioritise electronic waste, paper and packaging.

The Act also now provides for a waste management pricing strategy, the establishment of a Waste Management Bureau, and for mechanisms to oversee the disbursement of revenue collected.

We will also consult on the proposed development of regulations for, inter alia, the separation of waste at source, the banning of plastic waste at landfills; a prohibition of the burning of waste; a regional approach to waste management and disposal; and a deposit-return charge on plastic bottles.

We have seen a positive trend regarding the provision of and access to waste collection services over the past five years. As more households are provided with waste collection services we hope to achieve the desired 80% access.

We continue our commitment to licensing all unlicensed landfill sites and I am happy to announce that all 341 identified unlicensed sites will be finally regularised by the end of Sept. We are also pleased to announce that we will host our annual World Ozone Day event on the 16 September in the Eastern Cape.

I would now like to address the programmes to ensure the sustainable use and conservation of our biodiversity, natural heritage and ecosystem resources and services.

### **Conservation and Biodiversity Management**

Biological diversity underpins the economy and contributes to local livelihoods. South Africa's national botanical gardens have been visited by more than 22.7 million visitors, and have generated an income of over R400 million.

In addition the National Botanical Gardens network has hosted hundreds of thousands of learners, teachers and pensioners for garden-based programmes as well as facilitated hundreds of outreach greening projects in under-resourced schools and community facilities.

This year the restructured South African National Biodiversity Institute (or SANBI) turns ten years old and we are proud of the role it is playing in providing a sound scientific base for the management of South Africa's rich biodiversity.

Progress has been made with implementing the SANBI Gardens Expansion Strategy, which plans to establish two new national botanical gardens, one in the Eastern Cape and one in Limpopo province by 2015. I am pleased to announce that after close collaboration with the Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency I have proceeded to publish an 'Intention to Declare' notice for establishing the Kwelera Nature Reserve as the Kwelera National Botanical Garden just north of East London in the Eastern Cape.

Poaching remains the biggest threat to South Africa's rhino. Owing to the increase in poaching since 2008, the plight of the rhino has commanded significant international attention. Losing a rhino not only disturbs the ecological balance, it also harms the South African economy and tourism sector. In addition, owing to the involvement of international crime syndicates, rhino poaching also poses a threat to national security.

We will continue to strengthen existing interventions and explore new innovative options to ensure the long-term survival of the species.

An amount of R103 million for the period of 2014/15 to 2016/17 has been allocated to SANParks to combat rhino poaching. This is in addition to other financial assistance that SANParks has and continues to receive from private sector organisations.

As part of Rhino Day last year, a street parade was organised in Pretoria. We aim to undertake similar awareness raising efforts in rhino product consumer countries.

Our priority engagements with key African countries such as Mozambique will continue to receive high attention. Further afield, our engagements with Far East countries to address the demand for illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products are bearing fruit.

South Africa will host the 17th Conference of Parties (CoP) to CITES in 2016 and the process to prepare for the CoP has been initiated. The hosting of the CoP will provide South Africa with an opportunity to demonstrate its conservation successes and to promote sustainable utilisation.

Last year Cabinet directed that we investigate the desirability and feasibility of the possibility of making a proposal on the legalising of trade in rhino horn as a potential intervention to reduce the incidence of poaching at the 17th Conference of Parties to CITES in 2016.

The Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) will first consider the report from the Panel of Experts appointed in January 2014. The Panel will also engage with various stakeholders during the process.

We would like to urge all stakeholders to work with us in ensuring that whatever position we adopt at CITES in 2016, is well researched and adheres to sustainable utilisation principles.

Invasive alien species are now recognised as among the greatest threats to the ecological functioning of natural systems, to the productive potential of land and water, to the economy, and in terms of disease.

Environmental biosecurity will complement our internationally commended Working for Water program in preventing the introduction of potentially invasive species, and managing those already in the country.

This will prevent impacts and losses that can be measured in hundreds of billions of rands - apart from being the single biggest job creation program in South Africa since democracy.

### **Oceans and Coast**

The White Paper on the National Environmental Management of the Oceans - was gazetted last year.

It identified that South Africa has not fully exploited the economic, commercial, industrial or large-scale livelihood opportunities presented by the sustainable use and management of our oceans.

Discussions are currently underway between the public sector and other stakeholders to assess the socio-economic opportunities offered by sustainable ocean use and management - as the basis for developing a vibrant oceans economy.

We are developing a five- to ten-year strategic plan to unlock growth in these sectors, adapting a methodology used by Malaysia. We have named this project Operation Phakisa.

Honourable Members, we stand ready to work with all our communities to take South Africa forward.

We are committed to eradication of poverty, and inclusive growth that creates jobs while also preserving the environment for future generations as we are enjoined by the Constitution of the Republic.

I thank you.

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