



**forestry, fisheries  
& the environment**

Department:  
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**Ref: O2/1/5/2**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**(For written reply)**

**QUESTION NO. 1734 {NW2061E}**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 16 of 2022**

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**Mr N Singh (IFP) to ask the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) :**

What role (a) did and (b) will her department play in mitigating the risks of the recent floods in KwaZulu-Natal;

**1734. THE MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPLIES:**

a) During the recent floods in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), through its entity, namely the South African Weather Service (SAWS), issued various media releases ahead of the predicted severe weather events, indicating possible disruptions and high impacts. The warnings were disseminated via various media channels, including print media, television and radio stations, as well as social media applications. The media releases were also communicated to all disaster management structures, including at national, provincial and district levels.

SAWS also participated and presented at various forums to disseminate these warnings, including to the Intergovernmental Committee on Disaster Management (ICDM), of which the purpose is to plan and coordinate government's response to any potential disaster before, during and/or after an event. This structure also reports into Cabinet and updates Cabinet members on activities of the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC), among others. Furthermore, SAWS disseminated

severe weather warnings to all disaster management structures by SMS, email and XML (Extensible Markup Language) coding using the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP). The warnings can also be accessed by the public through the website [www.weathersa.co.za](http://www.weathersa.co.za), through social media on Twitter @SAWeatherServic and on the Facebook page with the handle South African Weather Service/

The DFFE has deployed its legislative powers to provide the support that it can in line with legislative provisions. Support initiatives have also been undertaken by the DFFE as part of the government-wide response to the disaster in KZN. These include environmental impact assessments (EIAs), in which quick and verbal authorisations are given and followed up with written confirmation of the authorisations to repair the damaged infrastructure. If required, waste licences are issued with efficient verbal authorisations and followed up with written confirmation of the authorisations to operate due to the disaster.

The DFFE is part of the task team that is assessing the impact of the floods on all other affected waste facilities (provincial mandate). Clean-up activities are currently underway under the oversight of the DFFE in collaboration with sister departments and the provincial authorities of KZN. This is in line with a recently developed intervention plan.

The intergovernmental structures that the DFFE is involved with include the following:

- Department of Water and Services (DWS) War Room;
- Extended National Joint Flood Coordination Committee;
- National and Provincial Environment Authorities Task Team on Response Measures for the KZN Disaster;
- National Joint Task Team on Integrated Flood Risk and Early Warnings (Lead: DCOG-NDMC);
- National Joint Task Team on Communication and Community Mobilisation (Lead: GCIS);
- National Joint Task Team on Infrastructure Interventions (Lead: Public Works and Infrastructure and DCOG-MISA); and
- National Joint Task Team on Economic Recovery and Reconstruction (Lead: Trade Industry and Competition [DTIC]).

- b) In future, the DFFE, through SAWS, will continue to partner with disaster management structures, including at national, provincial and district levels to conduct weather- and climate-awareness campaigns and training about the impact of severe weather and climate, and the mitigations thereof, in order to inform and educate the public, especially disadvantaged communities. In addition, SAWS will engage with the National Disaster Management Centre regularly to provide seasonal forecasts.

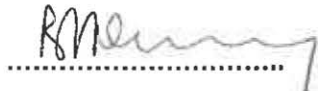
In addition to the interventions mentioned above in relation to the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), the DFFE also developed the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, which was approved by Cabinet in 2020 for implementation. Furthermore, the strategy and the draft Climate Change Bill will require sectors of society, national sectoral departments, provincial government and the local government sphere to develop climate change response plans. Through the Climate Change Bill and the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, a coordinated approach to responding to climate change will be facilitated.

The DFFE is already collaborating with SAWS and other departments, such as the Mpumalanga Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs (DARDLEA), in planning and rolling out weather and climate awareness, and training initiatives.

SAWS, in partnership with the DFFE, is working with donor partners to develop outreach and capacity support to districts, in line with the presidential district development model approach. The project is aimed at providing tailor-made capacity building at a district level in line with the model. The DFFE is working on a multihazard early warning system in KZN to empower the community and small-scale farmers to use climate services. The DFFE is also implementing projects funded through the Adaptation Fund, which are aimed at building community resilience in KZN.

Accessibility to early warnings also play a significant role in mitigating risk and the DFFE (through SAWS) will seek to establish stronger collaboration with other government departments, other State organs, as well as private stakeholders to improve the current dissemination channels. This will ensure that warnings reach all the citizens of the country in time.

**Regards**



**MS B D CREECY, MP**  
**MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

**DATE:** 20/5/2022