



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

(For written reply)

QUESTION NO. 240 {NW243E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 1 of 2021

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Mr M G E Hendricks (Al-Jama-ah) to ask the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:

- (1) Whether her department has investigated recent reports of artificial breaching and/or the opening of the Lake St Lucia mouth to carve an artificial link to the beach, despite concerns by several ecologists against such moves and several estuarine experts having recommended that 50 years of artificial manipulation of the mouth should be halted; if not, why not, if so, what are the relevant details;
- (2) whether she will investigate claims by the iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority that it was merely carrying out work to restore functionality of the estuary and not to break open the mouth; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

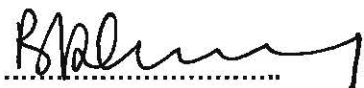
240. THE MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPLIES:

(1) and (2)

The Minister has noted the widespread public interest in this matter as well as differing scientific views on the most ideal management strategy for the conservation and preservation of this significant World Heritage Site. The Minister has decided to appoint an independent scientific panel to advise on among others:

1. To assess the *significance/impact* of the artificial breach and how this impact to the implementation of the Global Environment Facility GEF 5 project interventions and the St Lucia estuary management plan;
2. To determine the exceptional circumstances, as defined in the estuarine management plan, that lead to the decision to open the mouth, including those of an environmental, social and economic nature;
3. To establish the impact of the artificial breach on 6 January 2021 on the functioning of the Estuarine Functional Zone(EFZ), as well as the associated environmental, social and economic implications; and
4. To develop Guidelines for the immediate and ongoing management of the system.

Regards



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

DATE: 25/2/2021