



**environment, forestry
& fisheries**

Department:
Environment, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Ref: O2/1/5/2

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

(For written reply)

QUESTION NO. 2621 {NW3335E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 45 of 2020

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Ms H S Winkler (DA) to ask the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:

- (1) Whether she has been informed that the estuary at the world-renowned Isimangaliso Wetland Park is blocked by silt deposits which cut off the confluence between fresh and marine water thereby destroying the unique estuary ecosystem at the specified site; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, (a) what are the relevant details and (b) on what date will the estuary be dredged;
- (2) whether funding will be allocated to assist Ezemvelo KZN in the upkeep and maintenance of tourist facilities, including Crocodile World which is in a severe state of disrepair with members of the public complaining of animal neglect such as malnutrition of the crocodiles?

2621. THE MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPLIES:

1. (a) and (b)

Yes, the Minister is aware of the issues related to the St. Lucia Estuarine Functional Zone. However, the siltation at the opening and closing of the St Lucia Lake mouth is greatly influenced and affected by the agricultural activities that are taking place on the uMfolozi river floodplain, which is the main fresh water source for Lake St. Lucia.

To address the matter, a symposium was held which included scientists, user groups, managers, tourism operators and fishermen. The symposium concluded with resolutions intended to find an inclusive solution to the problem.

The task team will meet in the next two weeks and make recommendations based on scientific facts. The recommendations from the task team will inform future interventions and should dredging be an option, only then will timeframes for the dredging be decided upon.

2. The maintenance of the tourism facilities is the responsibility of the Member of the Executive Council for the province. The Department is advised that the crocodiles in the Crocodile Centre are healthy and regularly fed, once a week in winter and twice a week in summer. Regarding the upkeep and maintenance of the Crocodile Centre, referred to herein as the Crocodile World, iSimangaliso has an arrangement with Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife (EKZNW) to provide assistance, not only for the Crocodile Centre, but for all the tourism facilities that are currently operated by Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. The Department has made funding available to maintain tourism facilities, including the Crocodile Centre.

Regards



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

DATE: 20/11/2020