



environmental affairs

Department:
Environmental Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Ref:02/1/5/2

MINISTER

QUESTION NO. 146 FOR ORAL REPLY: NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

A draft reply to Mr O J Sefako (North West: ANC) to the above-mentioned question is enclosed for your consideration.

**MS LIMPHO MAKOTOKO
DIRECTOR-GENERAL (ACTING)**

DATE:

DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED

**MRS B E E MOLEWA, MP
MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

DATE:

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

(For oral reply)

QUESTION NO. 146 {CO403E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 27 of 2016

DATE OF PUBLICATION: 18 October 2016

Mr O J Sefako (North West: ANC) to ask the Minister of Environmental Affairs:

- (1) What action is her Department taking to ensure that bottlenecks in the provinces that are frustrating the people and parks' initiatives are removed (details furnished);
- (2) whether her Department will expand its anti-poaching efforts to include elephants (details furnished); if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details; and
- (3) how will her Department change its approach if anti-poaching efforts are modified to include elephant population?

146. THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS REPLIES:

- (1) Environmental management, inclusive of nature is a function of concurrent national and provincial legislative competence. Consequently, cooperative governance arrangements exist at both official political levels through structures such as Technical Working Groups, the Forum of protected Areas CEO Forum (a Forum of Heads of Provincial Environmental Affairs departments chaired by the Director General) and MINMEC (a Ministerial Forum with participation of MECs).

As a priority Programme for the sector, any challenges for the sector relating to the People and Parks Programme are addressed through the intergovernmental platform. MINMEC has already been apprised of implementation challenges at provincial level and some of these have been previously addressed by MECs.

The 7th People and Parks Conference held on 20th to 22nd September 2016 has identified and agreed on a set of key actions to strengthen the implementation of the Programme. A robust and time bound implementation plan is being unpacked in this regard.

- (2) Anti-poaching efforts in National and Provincial Parks in South Africa are not only geared towards fighting Rhino poaching but towards the enforcement of the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act as well as the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act in general . It is not always easy to determine whether or not a poacher had entered a Park or a Reserve to poach a Rhino or an Elephant, therefore anti-poaching efforts cover all our endangered species of which elephant is one. The overall focus of the Key interventions intended to strengthen anti-poaching activities include among others the following:

It's key pillars are:

- Compulsory interventions aimed at the implementation of the Integrated Strategic Management Approach aimed at stabilisation to a downward trend in the number of wildlife including elephants poached. These interventions include specific actions on arrests, investigations and prosecutions.
- Biological management of elephant populations includes the implementation of the national norms and standards for the management of elephants in South Africa (2008) as supported by site specific elephant management plans. South Africa will continue to implement the elephant research programme which is aimed at providing evidence based approaches to elephant management. In addition, South Africa will continue to work with neighbouring countries and other range states in ensuring that the key drivers of elephant poaching are addressed including maintenance and expansion of elephant habitats, and improvement of local communities, cooperation and collaboration on African elephant conservation. The long term sustainability of anti-poaching efforts will be ensured through greater involvement of local communities in conservation efforts.
- Furthermore is the need to ensure effective implementation of the overall regional elephant plan and as such it will be important to ensure smooth implementation of the overall elephant response will partnership with other elephant range states consistent with African Elephant Action.
- In addition, a number of specific operational elements will continue to be implemented including aerial and satellite operations in identified Parks as well as intelligence sharing and joint operations.

- (3) The Department will not necessarily be changing the anti-poaching approaches used for rhino conservation to incorporate protection of elephant populations. The lessons learnt and experience gathered in dealing with rhino poaching have shown that the focus needs to be on strengthening institutions to be better able to respond to current and emerging threats. The focus will continue to be on enhancing the institutional capacity in an integrated manner. The institutional capacity being addressed includes human, technical, financial as well as improved communication with communities surrounding conservation areas.

It is therefore unlikely that in the near term, the overall approach to anti-poaching efforts will be modified since the current strategy accommodates key species such as elephants, rhinos, pangolins and cycads. However, the Department will continue to adapt its anti-poaching strategies in response to emerging threats. The anti-poaching efforts further benefit from the detailed implementation plans that have been developed through the Rhino Conservation Lab process which entailed the strengthening of anti-poaching capabilities specifically within the provincial parks. Best practice learnt from the Kruger National Park will be replicated in other areas and various other interventions are planned which are aimed at improving protection of specific reserves as well as increasing the anti-poaching units' capability to undertake both reactive and proactive work. These interventions will also strengthen government's ability to respond to elephant poaching.

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