



## **environmental affairs**

Department:  
Environmental Affairs  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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**Ref: 02/1/5/2**

**MINISTER**

### **QUESTION NO. 183 FOR WRITTEN REPLY: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

A draft reply to **Mrs C N Z Zikalala (IFP)** to the above-mentioned question is enclosed for your consideration.

**MS NOSIPHO NGCABA  
DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

**DATE:**

**DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED**

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

**DATE:**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**(For written reply)**

**QUESTION NO. 183**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 2 of 2014 {NW189E}**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION: 21 February 2014**

**Mrs C N Z Zikalala (IFP) to ask the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs:**

Whether she intends to introduce legislation that will declare white lions a protected sub-species or critically endangered sub-population of the species *panthera leo tsau*, given that there are fewer than 12 white lions left in their endemic habitat of the greater Timbavati region; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

**183. THE MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS REPLIES:**

No, Section 56 of the National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act 10 of 2004) (NEMBA) provides for the listing of species as threatened or protected. The species, African lion (*Panthera leo*), is listed as Vulnerable in terms of Section 56 of NEMBA. The term “**species**” means a kind of animal, plant or other organism that does not normally interbreed with individuals of another kind, and includes any sub-species, cultivar, variety, geographic race, strain, hybrid or geographically separate population. There is, therefore, no need to list specific sub-species of African lion in terms of NEMBA since all indigenous sub-species will be regulated in the same manner (i.e. permits are required to authorise the carrying out of restricted activities involving the species).

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species, two sub-species are recognised based on genetic analysis (O'Brien *et al.* 1987, Dubach *et al.* 2005):

- African lion *Panthera leo leo* (Linnaeus, 1758)
- Asiatic lion *Panthera leo persica* (Meyer, 1826)

The Department has not been provided with peer reviewed scientific information confirming the taxonomic classification of the white lion as a sub-species.

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