



environmental affairs

Department:
Environmental Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Ref:02/1/5/2

MINISTER

QUESTION NO. 187 FOR WRITTEN REPLY: NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

A draft reply to Ms C Labuschagne (Western Cape: DA) 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 ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

DATE:

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

(For written reply)

QUESTION NO. 187{CW241E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO 15 of 2016

DATE OF PUBLICATION: 27 May 2016

Ms C Labuschagne (Western Cape: DA) to ask the Minister of Environmental Affairs:

(1) Whether the Marine Spatial Planning is part of Operation Phakisa; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details,

(2) What is her department's position on the (a) research on bulk marine sediment mining and (b) impact thereof on (i) the marine ecosystems and (ii)(aa) jobs and (bb) livelihoods sustained by fishing and marine tourism? CW241E

187. THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS REPLIES:

1. Yes.

The Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) is part of Operation Phakisa, and it is at the core of ensuring an effective and an all- inclusive ocean governance program. Relevant details to the matter entails the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) led process of establishing an MSP National Working Group (NWG) which comprises various relevant National Government Departments, for example, the Department of Mineral Resources (DMR); the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF); etc. One of the key deliverables of the NWG is the development of the MSP Framework which will be gazette by the Minister of DEA for public comments. A parallel MSP process that DEA has been spearheading is the MSP Bill which is essential for the implementation of the MSP Framework. The MSP Bill was gazetted for public comments by the Minister of DEA on 25 March 2016, and the closing date was 23 May 2016. Presently, the Department is busy with the collation of all the comments that the public has sent to the Department.

2(a) To our knowledge, bulk seabed mining has not yet been implemented anywhere in the world; therefore, there is no point of reference for inferring the damage caused, let alone the resilience

or recovery of the ecosystems and their components to these impacts. The Department therefore cautions that there is an urgent need for research before allowing bulk seabed mining, including scoping studies, environmental impact assessments and possibly modeling studies of the environmental effects on seabed communities and in the water column. The Department also advises that in the event that mining is to be permitted, it should initially only be on a very small scale and on a trial basis.

- 2(b) (i) The Department is therefore concerned about the potential effects of bulk seabed mining on the ocean ecosystems. The severity of the impact on the seabed and the extent of mining activities would be far greater than that of marine diamond mining, with destruction of existing benthic habitat, and associated impacts such as releases of sediment plumes which may contain toxic compounds and heavy metals, including in inshore areas where excess sediment and water from the operations would be released back into the environment. Apart from the fact that such impacts will be severe and extensive, they would have knock-on effects on the ecosystems' food web.

- (ii) (aa) and (bb)

Twenty-two thousand and one hundred and five (22105) individuals are employed, with the majority in Hake Deep Sea Trawl (5916), followed by Small Pelagics (5203) and Squid (2998) fishing.

The Department does not specifically regulate marine tourism, but manage and regulate activities involving non-consumptive use of marine species (such as Boat Based Whale Watching and White Shark Cage Diving) that support marine tourism.

The estimate of employment in the Marine Tourism activities (Boat Based Whale Watching, White Shark Cage Diving and Scuba Diving) is a total of 902 employees.

These activities support the local economy directly by employing local residents and indirectly by attracting tourists to the towns of the area of operation.

---ooOoo---