



forestry, fisheries & the environment

Department:
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

(For written reply)

QUESTION NO. 1977 {NW2210E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 19 of 2021

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Dr D W Bryant (DA) to ask the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:

- (1) Whether her department is opposed to the global treaty on multilateral environmental agreement dealing with non-plastic pollution (details furnished); if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (2) whether her department is considering to import more plastic waste; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (3) whether she has found that the current systems and processes of the Republic are effective in significantly reducing the amount of plastic waste, in particular the amount of waste going into the ocean; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details?

1977. THE MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPLIES:

1. South Africa is aware of the global discussions around a potential new international treaty on marine litter and plastic pollution and has been participating actively in the United Nations Environment Assembly's Ad Hoc Open-Ended Expert Group on Marine Litter and Microplastics, where the matter has been considered. South Africa has not finalised the due process to inform

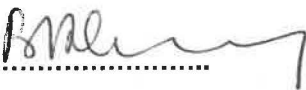
any pronouncement on a position concerning the global treaty for plastic pollution. This will only be done after a position paper is taken through the Cabinet Cluster process.

2. South Africa is a party to the Basel Convention on the control of the trans-boundary movement of waste. The 2019 amendments of Annexes to the Basel Convention addresses plastic waste in guiding member countries on the management of import and export of plastic waste. Using the guidance from the Basel Convention, the department has set up systems to handle applications for the importation of plastic waste. The applicants that intend to bring plastic waste into the country are obliged to indicate the intended use of the plastics and evidence of scarcity of the type of plastic waste they intend to import into South Africa.
3. South Africa's current systems and processes are effective in significantly reducing the amount of plastic waste, in particular the amount of waste going into the ocean. The department has introduced the following to address the potential leakages of plastic into the ocean:
 - (a) The Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Regulations were published in Government Gazette 43879 (Notice No. 1184) on 05 November 2020 for implementation and apply to the following sectors: electrical and electronic equipment, lighting and paper, packaging and some single use products. These EPR Regulations outline a new approach to waste management in South Africa and will contribute significantly to the diversion of plastic waste from landfill.
 - (b) In September 2020, Cabinet approved the National Waste Management Strategy, 2020 in terms of section 6 of NEM: WA. The strategy is based on the update and revision of the 2011 version and built on the success and lessons learnt from the previous version. Waste Minimisation forms part of the focus areas in the latest version of the strategy.
 - (c) The amended regulations to Plastic Carrier Bags and Plastic Flat Bags Regulations were gazetted on 07 April 2021 in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) (NEMA) and NEM:WA. The amendments focus on promoting a circular economy and ensuring circularity by prescribing the design through setting minimum recycled content in a phased manner starting in the year 2023 until 2027. The amended regulations create a demand for plastic waste to be used as a recycle.
 - (d) The department is also supporting other initiatives that are led by numerous organisations (private and civil society) in the country that are aimed at generating valuable information to support policy making for the management of plastic waste in South Africa. These initiatives include, amongst others, the initiative to end plastic waste, the Plastic Pact and

the Plastics Master Plan (led by the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC)).

- (e) The department implements various Environmental Programmes that are aimed at cleaning waste in the environment. The department's Source to Sea initiative aimed at stemming the flow of litter from upstream sources and catchments on land into the ocean environment is one such programme. Under this project, the department is working with municipalities to deploy litter interception devices in priority rivers and to collect litter from these rivers systems.

Regards


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MS B D CREECY, MP

MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

DATE:10/9/2021