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. 2319 {NW2638E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 23 of 2021

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

(1) Following the recent United Nations report on climate change which clearly sets out the projected impact of climate change on the environment going forward, including the rise in sea level, what steps are being taken to (a) evaluate the impact of the rise in sea levels on the Republic's coastal communities and (b) develop contingency plans with the relevant local communities and authorities;

(2) (a) which areas of the coastline of the Republic has she found are deemed to be most at risk from the rise in the level of the sea over the coming 50 to 100 years and (b) what are the details of the envisaged impact;

(3) whether changes in the temperature of the ocean and the consequent impact on the coastal fishing industry is being evaluated; if not, why not; if so,

(4) whether these findings will be made available to Mr D W Bryant; if not, why not; if so, on what date?

2319. THE MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPLIES:

1. (a) The Department developed a National Coastal Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment in 2019, a decision support tool to assist coastal planning and response to physical hazards attributable to climate change, such as sea level rise, flooding, erosion, or storm events. The National Coastal Climate Change Assessment Report and the Geo-Spatial Index for coastal climate change vulnerability of South Africa's coastline and estuaries are available. http://mapservice.environment.gov.za/Coastal%20Viewer/

   (b) The Department has been rolling out training and capacity building for municipalities and has completed seven (7) sessions with coastal municipalities (Metropolitans and Districts) on the use of the data generated to support the decision making process of authorities. Both an on-line and offline tool have been developed and shared with all coastal municipalities and provinces. Coastal provinces have also been working with their respective municipalities to develop Coastal Management Lines (CMLs) for their coastline to deal precisely with coastal risk within their programmes, plans or strategies to address the sea level rise impact.

2. (a)(b)

   Less risk - west coast

   - A general decrease in rainfall in the western and southern part will reduce the risk of flooding in river catchments (apart from the Orange River with its far inland reaching catchment).
   - The expected decrease of storm frequency and intensity will reduce the likelihood and intensity of sea storms. This means that the risk of coastal flooding and erosion on the west coast might be decreasing.

   More risk - east coast

   - In contrast, the east coast is likely to become more affected by climate related weather events. The expected increase in the occurrence of storms and cyclones in northern KwaZulu-Natal can increase the damage through direct wind impacts.
   - The department is currently partnering with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) on the green book, and part of the implementation will include identifying possible areas that require long-term adaptation measures to facilitate and achieve sustainable coastal development in South Africa.

3. In 2021 the department published three reports which deal with climate change and fisheries in South Africa. These three reports are the results of national workshops that were held as part of a larger project under the umbrella of the Benguela Current Commission. The first of these evaluated the sensitivity of different fishing sectors to climate change, the likely impact that climate change would have on these sectors, how adaptable the sectors are likely to be, and how vulnerable they are. The second report evaluated possible adaptation measures for the different fishing sectors, indicating the likely threats to each sector and detailing possible adaptation measures and evaluating these in terms of their feasibility, priority and timescales. The third report evaluated existing research for fisheries adaptation to climate change and identified areas where additional research is required going forwards. The reports can be made available on request to the communications unit of the Department.

4. The science observations on temperature and other key features can be accessed at https://www.environment.gov.za/documents/research#oceans. The findings are available in three reports, and copies of these can be provided.

Regards

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

DATE: 18/11/2021