



environmental affairs

Department:
Environmental Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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MINISTER

QUESTION NO. 429 FOR WRITTEN REPLY: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

A draft reply to Mr T Z Hadebe (DA) to the above-mentioned question is enclosed for your consideration.

**MS NOSIPHO NGCABA
DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

DATE:

DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED

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

DATE:

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
(For written reply)

QUESTION NO. 429 {NW484E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 7 of 2017

DATE OF PUBLICATION: 3 March 2017

Mr T Z Hadebe (DA) to ask the Minister of Environmental Affairs:

(a) Why was the press conference scheduled to announce her department's highly anticipated rhinoceros management programme postponed and (b) by what date will the specified press conference take place? NW484E

429. THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS REPLIES:

- (a) The media conference was postponed because the date that it was scheduled for clashed with the press briefings of other Government programmes such as the Budget and others, all of which was happening on the same day hence only two journalists had confirmed attendance and this was not going to help. The other reason was that the other Ministers within the Security Cluster were also unavailable.
- (b) In light of the fact that the press conference had to be postponed, the department took a decision to release the comprehensive media statement outlining the success of the Integrated Strategic Management of Rhinoceros, and including the rhino poaching and arrest statistics on 27 February 2017. The statement is attached, for ease of reference.

Minister Molewa highlights progress on Integrated Strategic Management of Rhinoceros

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27 February 2017

This statement covers the period January through December 2016, which is inclusive of the period September to December 2016.

As you will all know, rhino poaching is a National Priority Crime, and we as government continue to work as a team in the implementation of the Integrated Strategic Management of Rhinoceros.

This is our multi-sectoral, interdisciplinary approach involving Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) and the South African National Parks (SANParks), the Department of Defence (as a leader of the SANDF) the South African Police Service (SAPS) and its Directorate of Priority Crime Investigation (DPCI) also known as the Hawks, the State Security Agency (SSA), the South African Revenue Service (SARS), the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, as well as the provincial conservation authorities.

Our respective government departments continue to work in unison with the private sector, communities and civil society in ensuring that our integrated approach yields success.

We have stated on numerous occasions that the media has an important role to play in raising awareness about the issue of rhino poaching.

A number of media houses have therefore been instrumental in mobilizing the South African public at large around our approach to conserving our country's rhino and I want to encourage you to keep up the good work.

The Integrated Strategic Management Approach comprises four pillars, namely:

- Compulsory Interventions
- Managing Rhino Populations
- Long-term sustainability Interventions, and
- New interventions

All of the four pillars are implemented in the context of:

- Regional and International cooperation.

These have delivered a number of satisfying results that we will address during this briefing.

1. Compulsory Interventions

1.1 Arrests, investigations and prosecutions

As you are aware, enforcement operations related to rhino are led by the South African Police Service (SAPS) supported by the afore-mentioned departments and State Agencies.

These enforcement operations form a firm base from which SANParks, KZN Ezemvelo Wildlife, and our provincial parks authorities and agencies execute their well-planned anti-poaching operations.

Amongst these are enforcement operations that are implemented in KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and Limpopo and are also coordinated by the Mission Area Joint Operations Command (MAJOC) which is based in Skukuza. The Kruger National Park experiences relatively higher levels of rhino poaching, where due focus is given.

The Intensive Protection Zone (IPZ) approach in the KNP is working well and ensures more tailored solutions to the different protection zones, including for the protection of elephant. Key to this success has been the development of a world class anti-poaching unit like an Air wing, a Canine Unit, a Special Ranger capability, Protection Services and an Environmental Crime Investigation unit.

In addition to the existing interventions, we continue to identify and use game-changing technological

interventions as critical to winning our battle against poaching. These include customized technology systems primarily aimed at situational awareness, such as early warning, detection and tracking systems. We appreciate the support of the donor community and the Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) for their innovation and partnership in this regard.

We are pleased to announce that in the period under review, there has been an increase in the number of arrests for poaching-related offences inside the Kruger National Park, the area hardest hit by poaching.

During 2016, the SAPS reported that a total of 680 poachers and traffickers were arrested for rhino-related poaching offences nationally. This is a marked increase in arrests from 317 in 2015. Of this number, 417 were arrested both within and outside the Kruger National Park.

A total of 148 firearms were seized inside the Park in 2016, and 6 just outside the Park.

The Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation continues with its efforts towards disrupting and combating wildlife traffickers during 2016 and participated in several national and international initiatives in combating wildlife trafficking with national and international partners.

The Hawks currently have other projects under investigation.

We herewith provide an update on a number of high-profile cases.

- In the matter of State v Groenewald and 11 others the next court date: trial ready is scheduled for the 15th of June 2017. The accused face 1 840 charges of racketeering.
- In the matter of State v Ras and 10 Others, the accused face 318 charges of racketeering. The case has been provisionally postponed to the 15th of September 2017.
- In the matter of State v Big Joe Nyalunga and 9 others the accused face 73 charges of racketeering. The next court date is on the 14th of March 2017.
- In the matter of State v Sithole and 21 others the accused face charges of racketeering. The case went to trial on the 25th of January 2017.
- In the matter of State vs Gwala and two others the next court date is 17 March 2017. It is envisaged that the trial in this case will proceed in the second part of 2017.

The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development recognizes that to ensure success on rhino anti-poaching, initiatives need to be adequately measured, cases have to be investigated and successfully prosecuted, and those found guilty of rhino poaching convicted.

In the period under review a number of rhino poaching related offences went to trial.

The following are the highlights of some of the successful convictions.

- In the matter of State v Rodger and 2 others, the accused faced charges of illegal hunting of rhino, possession of rhino horn and the illegal possession of firearms and ammunition. They were convicted on the 08th of March 2016. Accused number one was found guilty and sentenced to five (5) years imprisonment. Accused number two was found guilty and sentenced to twenty (20) years imprisonment. Accused number three was found guilty and sentenced to nine (9) years imprisonment.
- In the matter of State v Tlou and 5 others, the accused were charged with illegal dealing in rhino horn and the illegal hunting of rhino. On the 11th of March 2016 five of the accused were found guilty and sentenced to 15 years imprisonment. The sixth accused was found guilty and sentenced to 10 years imprisonment.
- In the matter of State v Pahmbudzirai, the accused was charged with the illegal hunting of rhino and the possession of rhino horn. On the 11th of August 2016 the accused was found guilty and sentenced to 12 years imprisonment.
- In the matter of State v Kubai and 1 other the accused were charged with the illegal hunting of rhino and the possession of rhino horn. On the 15th of August 2016 both accused were found guilty and sentenced to eleven (11) years imprisonment.

In order to successfully tackle the illicit trade in rhino horn, it is key that we detect and prevent incidents of smuggling, working with our colleagues in neighbouring countries.

We are pleased to inform you that the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development has

decided to open the Skukuza Regional Court with effect from 7th March 2017. Currently, high profile cases are being transferred to the Skukuza Regional Court. The decision to open this as a Regional Court will ensure that case turnaround times are expedited.

1.2 Ports of Entry and Exit

In 2016, the Green Scorpions trained 905 border officials on initiatives focused on the Illicit International Cross Border Movement of Endangered Species.

In December 2016, 90 judicial officers from four different countries participated in a Judicial Colloquium related to the adjudication of crimes relating to biodiversity, the result of a partnership between DEA, the GEF-UNEP Rhino Programme and the South African Judicial Education Institute.

The GEF-UNEP Programme has also enabled the renovation of a new laboratory at the Veterinary Genetics Laboratory of the University of Pretoria where the rhino DNA samples are analysed. This additional capacity has also enabled us to analyse some of the backlog of routine rhino horn samples. During 2016, we also received rhino DNA samples from seizures in Mozambique and Vietnam. This has enabled us to link these seizures to illegal activities in South Africa relating to rhino and providing investigators with critical information to guide further investigations.

1.3 Poaching Statistics

We are pleased to report that our Integrated Strategic Management Approach is yielding the desired results. The 2016 statistics indicate that we registered a decline in the number of rhino poached, both for the country as a whole and for KNP. A total of 1 054 rhino were poached in 2016, compared to 1 175 in the same period for 2015, representing a decline of 10.3%.

Specifically for the KNP, a total of 662 rhino carcasses were found in 2016 compared to 826 in 2015. This represents a reduction of 19.85% in 2016. This is despite a continued increase in the number of illegal incursions into the Kruger National Park.

For 2016 there were a staggering 2883 instances of poaching-related activities (such as poaching camps, contacts, crossings, sightings, tracks and shots fired) in the Park, compared to 2 466 recorded in the same period in 2015. This is an increase of 16.9%. These criminal gangs are armed to the teeth, well-funded and part of transnational syndicates who will stop at nothing to get their hands on rhino horn. This decrease can be attributed to the efforts of our men and women on the ground, especially our rangers.

While there has been a decrease in the number of rhino killed for their horns in the Kruger National Park and Mpumalanga, the number of rhino poached unfortunately increased in some other provinces. This indicates that syndicates are feeling the pressure from the interventions being employed in the KNP. We are therefore prioritising these pressure points through enforcement operations.

It is with concern that we report that in 2016, 46 elephants were poached in the Kruger National Park. The interventions being implemented to counter rhino poaching are also used to respond to this emerging threat.

It is clear that more financial resources are required to address this challenge that we are experiencing in terms of both rhino and elephant poaching.

2. Managing Rhino Populations

2.1 Translocations

SANParks continues with the translocation of rhino from high risk poaching areas to safer and better suited, secure localities.

This has enabled us to evaluate the progress of our conservation management approach and sets out key actions and strategies needed to ensure the long-term survival and growth of the rhino species in the wild.

During 2016 eleven rhino were internally translocated away from boundaries in the KNP for security reasons, thereby complimenting the internal movements that started during 2014.

We stated in our last briefing that we were in the process of conducting an evaluation of internal translocations. The evaluation will be formally completed by March this year.

It is important to state that the moving of these animals always carries with it inherent risks, especially in respect of old cows and territorial bulls. But what is encouraging is that young cows and sub-adult males integrate easily into existing rhino populations.

2.2 Biological Management

Our Rhino Stronghold Initiative continues, though the drought has affected our operations as it did for most of last year. Translocation has proven a viable biological management tool to ensure the long-term sustainability and safety of South Africa's rhino population. During 2016, a total of 106 rhino were translocated to private rhino strongholds, following suitability assessments conducted by SANParks late last year. Overall, our translocations have been successful and no trans-located rhino were poached. We are all aware of the damaging effect this drought continues to have on our country, and the KNP has not been immune. We have found that the deaths of rhino in the KNP, as a result of the drought of drought condition, have risen.

During September 2016, a rhino survey using the scientifically accepted block count method recorded that a total of 6 649 - 7 830 white rhino lived in Kruger National Park.

This is lower than the 8 365 - 9 337 that lived in the Kruger National Park during 2015. It must be noted that the natural deaths of white rhino increased due to the unprecedented drought conditions.

A total of 349 – 465 black rhino lived in Kruger National Park in 2016 compared to 313 – 453 in 2015. The drought effect was not as noticeable on the black rhinos.

2.4 Rhino Orphans

Adding to the impact of rhino management strategies, are ongoing efforts to recover and rear young rhino calves left orphaned through poaching incidents. The Peace Parks Foundation, through the Rhino Protection Programme, continues to provide crucial operational support to the rescue, care and rehabilitation of rhino orphans and currently there are approximately 28 orphans under the care of Kruger National Park and partners, with a 10 being cared for by Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

3. Long-term Sustainability Interventions

3.1 Amendment of Norms and Standards

We have finalised the amendments to the Norms and Standards for the marking of rhinoceros and rhinoceros horn, and the hunting of rhinoceros for trophy hunting purposes. These amendments are now subject to the approval processes for implementation.

3.2 The Moratorium on the sale of rhino horn; the proposed regulations for the Domestic Trade in Rhino Horn; and the Proposed Prohibition on Powdering and Shaving of Rhino Horn

On 8 February 2017, we published three notices for public participation.

The first notice contains provisions relating to proposed regulations for the domestic trade in rhino horn, the second one proposes prohibitions on the powdering and shaving of rhino horn, and the third notice contains a proposal to remove the Eastern black rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis michaeli*) from the list of invasive species and to include it in the list of threatened or protected species (as a protected species). The latter ensures that all rhino sub-species are covered by the proposed legislative provisions.

By way of a brief background, a moratorium or prohibition on the domestic trade in rhino horn was implemented in 2009 as one of the measures to address the illegal killing of rhino and the illegal trade in rhino horn.

This prohibition was implemented to enable government to develop and implement compliance, regulatory, monitoring and enforcement mechanisms to ensure domestic trade is well managed and regulated; while illegal activities are prosecuted.

We are convinced that the implementation of the 2009 moratorium was a rational and reasonable measure that contributed positively to the conservation and protection of the rhino in South Africa. In November 2015 the High Court of South Africa Gauteng Division ordered that the moratorium be set aside with retrospective effect. This followed an application brought by Johan Kruger and Another against the Department.

We have subsequently filed an application for leave to appeal this judgment to the Constitutional Court and we await the outcome of the court process. Until then the moratorium remains in place.

In considering actions to be taken relating to the moratorium and in response to the ongoing litigation, we developed a set of regulations that are in compliance with the Integrated Strategic Management of Rhino Approach adopted by Cabinet in 2014, Sections 56 and 57(2) of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (NEMBA), the Threatened or Protected Species (TOPS) Regulations, existing CITES Regulations relating to the import, export or re-export of rhino specimens, as well as applicable provincial and national legislation.

This set of proposed regulations will ensure that there is no gap in regulatory provisions, thus ensuring the strict regulation of a prospective domestic trade in rhino horn. The commercial international trade in rhino horn is prohibited in terms of the CITES.

3.3 Communities

Community involvement in conservation is critical to the success of the Integrated Strategic Management approach. The Department, working closely with the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform with strategic partners from government, conservation agencies, NGOs and private sector is implementing detailed initiatives to actively facilitate transformation of the sector through land

access and support programmes for new entrants.

The Biodiversity Economy provides a unique opportunity to enhance the livelihoods of communities based on the natural resources that they have at their disposal. Through the Biodiversity Economy Strategy, a number of initiatives aimed at unlocking the economic potential of biological resources have emerged.

These support programmes include basic infrastructure development, capacity building, game donation, business plan compilation, feasibility studies and facilitate market access. The wildlife economy component has to date provided support to community owned conservation enterprises in Mayibuye in KwaZulu-Natal, Double drift in the Eastern Cape, Balyepe, Leshiba and Mabaleng in Limpopo Province, Sepelong in the Free State, Nkambeni and Gidjana Bevhula around the KNP. The expected impact will be job creation, skills development and entrepreneurship. The average financial spending from the Department on these community interventions is R8m per project, excluding game donations and private sector investment.

In addition, as part of the implementation of the Biodiversity Economy Strategy, I am pleased to announce that we are in the process of consulting with provincial conservation authorities on a ground-breaking new initiative around game donation to previously disadvantaged communities. This is part of our efforts to transform the sector and ensure that we create opportunities for previously disadvantaged communities.

Making communities owners of wildlife remains key to our strategy. In this regard, as part of the implementation, SANParks has called for public expressions of interest that will create opportunities for emerging game farmers around national parks to provide mechanisms for the transparent and equitable supply of founder herds of game to applicants and raise awareness for conservation, protected area management and sustainable utilisation principles in the wildlife industry.

The People and Parks flagship programme continues to be a key component of our community support strategy. We continue to engage with communities surrounding our parks and jointly planning with them on issues of mutual interest. The Department is currently implementing 30 support projects around the country in the various protected areas with a total budget of R1 334 098 200. An additional 14 projects across all provinces are in the pipeline with an anticipated budget of R352 685 216. Through the People and Parks Window of the Environment Programme, we have created 1 585 408 job opportunities.

Through the implementation of the programme, facilitation of various pertinent aspects of communities related to protected areas management is diligently facilitated. In the eighth conference, which was hosted in September last year, significant strides were made, where eight tittle deeds were awarded and accompanying R1.2 million compensation each for North West claimed protected areas were transferred to the local communities.

At the recent conference, we endorsed the establishment of the Youth in Conservation Programme which seeks to mobilize for youth participation in matters of conservation. The inaugural youth workshop that conceptualized the action plan was held last month. Furthermore, as part of the long-term sustainability measures, the DEA embarked on a capacity building programmes targeting rhino poaching hotspot provinces, and to date we have trained 120 young people in Mpumalanga, Limpopo and North West. Plans are in place to roll out this youth programme in the remaining provinces (40 per province = 240).

The Kids in Parks programme continues to target a minimum of 5000 youth across the country. This programme involves young people at an early age, thus creating a sense of ownership towards conservation.

SANParks is in the process of conducting land suitability assessments on several properties owned by communities and entrepreneurs so that we can transfer animals to them, in line with the objectives of our Biodiversity Economy Strategy.

4. International and regional cooperation

4.1 Southern African Development Community (SADC)

The implementation of the SADC Law Enforcement and Anti-Poaching Strategy (LEAP) remains a priority. During a recent extraordinary joint meeting of the South African Development Community (SADC) Ministers of Environment and Natural Resources and of the Organ on Defence, Peace and Security Co-operation which took place in Swaziland (from 1 to 3 February 2017), it was agreed that the implementation of the SADC Law Enforcement and Anti-Poaching Strategy must be fast-tracked. This means that at the highest level within both the SADC security and environmental structures there is commitment to establish National Wildlife Crime Prevention Task Forces in order to facilitate the implementation of this Strategy:

- To fast-track the implementation of the SADC Law Enforcement and Anti-Poaching Strategy (LEAP), including the establishment and operationalization of the Wildlife Crime Prevention Coordination Unit (WCPCU);
- To put in place harmonized regional mechanisms for dealing with wildlife crime effectively, improve inter-agency cooperation and coordination between law enforcement officers to further align and harmonize law enforcement efforts; and
- Consider creating a window for wildlife under the SADC Regional Development Fund to support conservation and law enforcement as part of resource mobilization.

The Joint Ministers of Environment and Natural Resources and of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation further:

- Considered and adopted the SADC Law Enforcement and Anti-Poaching (LEAP) Strategy;
- Urged SADC Member States which have not established multi-agency National Wildlife Crime Prevention Task Forces yet, to do so in order to facilitate the implementation of the SADC Law Enforcement and Anti-Poaching (LEAP) Strategy;
- Urged Member States to prioritize and integrate activities in the SADC Law Enforcement and Anti-Poaching (LEAP) Strategy into their national plans;
- Recommended to Council to approve the establishment of a coordination, assessment and monitoring mechanism in the form of a Joint Committee of Ministers of Environment and Natural Resources, the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation and other relevant authorities to oversee implementation of the SADC Law Enforcement and Anti-Poaching (LEAP) Strategy. The Committee will also serve as a platform for sharing of information and best practices, and meet annually;
- Recommended to Council to approve the establishment of a Wildlife Crime Prevention and Coordination Unit to coordinate implementation of the crime and law enforcement component of the SADC LEAP Strategy as part of the Secretariat structure review process and that it be placed in the Directorate of the Organ; and
- Directed the Secretariat to enhance synergies and linkages with all relevant stakeholders in the implementation of the SADC Law Enforcement and Anti-Poaching (LEAP) Strategy.

4.2 Mozambique

Collaboration with the Government of Mozambique continues to improve and the partnership has been greatly successful in the past year.

Significant progress has been made in terms of constructing new houses and relocating families. Over 30% of the families from eight villages have been relocated. With the remaining 70% of families still to be relocated, this project is now expected to be completed in 2018. It has been impressed upon us that the government of Mozambique puts priority on quality and humanity within this resettlement process. An agreement between the government of Mozambique and its Private Concessionaires located on the Eastern boundary of the Kruger National Park was signed on 22 February in Maputo. The essence of this agreement is to formalize the involvement of Private Sector on enhanced protection of Wildlife as well as improvement of livelihoods of adjacent communities. This is a replication of what we in South Africa have done with our concessionaires on the Western side of the Kruger national Park and thus a direct result of our collaboration.

Specific interventions focused on the youth of the two countries were agreed upon. As a result, a youth awareness programme was developed as part of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Areas (GLTFCA) initiative. The aim of this programme would be to develop interventions which are specifically designed to create awareness amongst the youth on the value of the natural heritage of the two countries.

Following this, community members from the villages of Mavodze, Chibotane, Macavene and Mahlaule living in, and adjacent to, the Limpopo National Park in Mozambique were taken across the border into Kruger National Park (KNP) from 22 to 27 August 2016 on a Youth Programme Pilot Project. The main aim of the pilot was to empower local communities, create awareness and promote wise use of natural resources and was developed under the guidance of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park Joint Management Board and its implementing agencies in Mozambique and South Africa (SANParks). This pilot was implemented by the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation (Laureus) in collaboration with the Peace Parks Foundation (PPF).

The Joint Management Board is in the process of evaluating the pilot youth project, after which a framework to guide the development and implementation of a longitudinal programme will be designed. The longer term programme will also be extended to include the Zimbabwean component of the TFCA.

4.3 Lao People's Democratic Republic and Vietnam

Our work with Lao is part of the strategic collaboration with rhino range and consumer states, aimed at neutralising the threat of organised transnational criminal syndicates involved in the illegal wildlife trade. A Memorandum of Understanding in the field of Biodiversity Conservation and Management was signed with the Lao People's Democratic Republic during the 17th Conference of the Parties to CITES in September 2016.

The second phase of a Vietnamese Youth Education Project, implemented in partnership with Peace Parks Foundation and Wilderness Foundation, was launched in schools throughout Ho Chi Minh City in May 2016.

The campaign utilizes print, social and entertainment media integrated into the school, to educate and empower youth as ambassadors for rhino protection and conservation.

4.4. International Cooperation

During 2016 South Africa participated in the Hanoi Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade in Vietnam, a follow-up from conferences in London in 2014 and Kasane in Botswana in 2015.

Recognizing the significant scale and detrimental economic, environmental, security, and social impacts of the illegal trade in wildlife, much of the focus was on implementation of actions following the commitments made at the previous events.

In 2016 South Africa also successfully hosted the 17th Conference of the Parties to CITES and adopted a number of decisions relating to the illegal international trade in wildlife; combating wildlife cybercrime and strengthening wildlife forensic capacity.

All Parties were urged to review the implementation of the Resolution on the conservation and trade in rhino. The resolution urges all parties to adopt and implement comprehensive legislation and enforcement controls aimed at reducing illegal trade in rhino parts and derivatives, and that make provision for strong penalties, (including custodial sentences) to deter illegal killing of rhinoceros and illegal possession of and trade in rhino horn.

Other resolutions of importance include the Resolution aimed at prohibiting, preventing, detecting and countering corruption which facilitates activities conducted in violation of the Convention.

The Resolution on enforcement further strengthens international cooperation, the sharing of best practice and the mobilization of funds for sustainable interventions to combat wildlife trafficking in general.

The COP also adopted decisions directed at the CITES Secretariat to conduct missions to Vietnam and Mozambique and to report to the CITES Standing Committee.

4.5 International Law Enforcement Engagements

In a bid to improve coordination and communication between law enforcement agencies from different countries we continue to support and engage with the International Consortium to Combat Wildlife Crime (ICCWC) and in particular the CITES Secretariat, INTERPOL and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), that brings together law enforcement officials in African and South East Asian countries.

The Hawks have further strengthened their priority actions through engagement with international agencies, partnering with the Asset Recovery Inter Agency Network Southern Africa (ARINSA), the Wildlife Inter-Regional Enforcement (WIRE) group harnessing the support of international partners for those priorities that involve transnational syndicates. This addresses wildlife trafficking, combining resources and efforts and facilitating training opportunities and technology development. The management of rhino populations aimed at optimising birth rates is one of the focus areas of the Rhino Lab that was held in August 2016 as part of the broader Operation Phakisa programme. Guided by the outcomes of the Cabinet endorsed Committee of Inquiry report, the lab resulted in the establishment of a number of initiatives with detailed action plans. They will further strengthen the integrated approach to Rhino protection and conservation in South Africa.

The groundwork has been laid and excellent progress has been made in the past two years. The successes we have achieved are because of, inter alia, our dedicated law-enforcement authorities, dedicated prosecutors, customs and excise officials and the Department of Environmental Affairs' Green Scorpions. They are to be commended for the great work they have been doing in this space.

All South Africans are urged to report any wildlife crime so that we, as an integrated law enforcement effort team, can continue to successfully act against organised criminal enterprises fostering rhino poaching.

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