



environmental affairs

Department:
Environmental Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Ref:02/1/5/2

MINISTER

QUESTION NO. 17 FOR ORAL REPLY: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

A draft reply to Mr J M Mthembu (ANC) 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 ASSEMBLY

(For oral reply)

QUESTION NO. 17 {NO466E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 3 of 2016

DATE OF PUBLICATION: 23 February 2016

Mr J M Mthembu (ANC) to ask the Minister of Environmental Affairs:

With reference to the COP21 Agreement on Climate Change that was signed in Paris during November and December 2015, in which South Africa played a key role and which was an historic opportunity for the international community to respond to the challenges of climate change, which include legal obligations for countries to address climate change and setting the world on a trajectory to keep the increase in average global temperature below 2 °C, (a) what does the specified agreement mean for the work of the Government going forward and (b) what will change in respect of government programmes going forward to honour the decisions that were taken?

NO466E

17. THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS REPLIES:

The Twenty First Conference of Parties (COP 21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is universally regarded as a seminal point in the development of the international climate change regime under the UNFCCC, concluding as it did with the Paris Agreement. The Paris Agreement is a comprehensive framework which will guide international efforts to limit greenhouse gas emissions and to meet all the associated challenges posed by climate change.

South Africa welcome the adoption of this legally binding Agreement and its supporting decisions as this marks the successful conclusion of an intense four year global negotiation process that was started at the 17th Conference of Parties in Durban in 2011, under South Africa's leadership of the G77 plus China, which group was for the first time in its history cohesive, engaging and actively involved in all aspects. While not as ambitious or legally robust as South Africa would have preferred, I am of the view that the Paris outcome is the best deal possible for developing countries under the current international circumstances.

- (a) The reality on the ground is that South Africa is already acting on climate change and that we continue to significantly invest in renewable energy, public transport, energy efficiency, waste management and land restoration initiatives.

We also invest heavily in programmes that enable communities, farmers and industry to adapt to the impacts of climate change, for example through our working for water, wetlands and fire programmes.

We both provide assistance to fellow African countries and receive invaluable support from international partners.

- (b) **International reporting obligations.**

According to the Paris Agreement, South Africa will have to report on the implementation of our Nationally Determined Contributions as well as update or communicate new nationally determined contributions every 5 years, starting from 2025.

We will also now have to formulate and communicate **mid-term century**, long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies by 2020.

We will also have to submit **adaptation communications** periodically, which includes national priorities, implementation, plans and support needed. This complete the battle that we have been having for years in the UNFCCC where we were negotiating that Adaptation action be accounted for and be internationally recognized as a goal and also that countries like South Africa put a lot of investment on this. To this end the development of South Africa's National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy is well underway, and a framework for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, has been agreed by Cabinet.

Finally, I would like to say that South Africa will continue to build on the work that has already been done in responding to climate change, and must increase the **pace of implementation**.

---oo0oo---