



environment, forestry & fisheries

Department:
Environment, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

(For written reply)

QUESTION NO. 2594 {NW3308E}

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Mr N Singh (IFP) to ask the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:

Whether she can provide an update on steps taken by her department to date to (a) further reduce emissions from existing coal infrastructure and encourage a coal phase-out and (b) enable a just transition to sustainable energy systems in the Republic; if not, why not in each case; if so, in each case, what are the full, relevant details?

2594. THE MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPLIES:

- a) Key policy instruments developed and implemented by the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF) to reduce emissions from existing coal infrastructure and encourage a coal phase-out include: Sectoral Emission Targets (previously known as Desired Emission Reduction Outcomes) for sector and company level carbon budgets as well as pollution prevention plans.
 - (i) Sectoral Emission Targets
Desired Emission Reduction Outcomes (DEROs) – now referred to as Sector Emissions Targets (SETs) were assigned following the finalisation of the Mitigation Potential Analysis in 2015. The DEROs were set for short term cost-effective interventions (up to 2020). Going

forward, the SETs will be allocated based on existing policies and measures in the line sector Departments. Sector Departments will align, adjust, upscale and/or develop policies and measures to achieve SETs. The SETs will be used to constrain sector plans such as the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP), encouraging the phase-out of coal. SETs will be allocated soon after the promulgation of the Climate Change Act.

(ii) Carbon Budgets

The Department, since 2015, has been allocating voluntary carbon budgets to companies for the period 2016 to 2020. A carbon budget sets the maximum volume of emissions from certain activities that a company is allowed to emit over a certain time period. By assigning a carbon budget to a company, an indication is provided of the extent of greenhouse gas mitigation that is required within a specific time period. The reason for allocating carbon budgets on a voluntary basis was that the National Environmental Management: Air Quality Act, 2004 provisions do not allow for greenhouse emission capping. Thus, companies that emit greenhouse gases in excess of 0.1 Mega tonnes (Mt) annually, reported as carbon dioxide equivalents (CO₂-eq), were encouraged to voluntarily take up carbon budgets. The carbon budget design document, which was produced as a collaborative effort between the Department and the industry, followed the threshold which was then used in identifying companies that are required to prepare, submit and implement pollution prevention plans (see below).

So far, 48 companies submitted applications, and from this, 33 companies have been allocated carbon budgets. These include coal mining and electricity production companies. The carbon budget allocated for this period (2016 to 2020) is 1,688,744,538.14 tons (just under 1, 7 Billion tons). Note that carbon budgets will be mandatory once the Climate Change Act gets promulgated.

(iii) Pollution Prevention Plans

In the absence of an appropriate legal instrument to manage the greenhouse gas emissions, the late former Minister of Environmental Affairs published a Notice to declare the greenhouse gases as priority air pollutants, under section 29(1) of the National Environmental Management: Air Quality Act, 2004 (Act No. 39 of 2004), read with section 29(4) on 21 July 2017. The former Minister also issued the National Pollution Prevention Plans Regulations in respect of greenhouse gases, under sections (53(a), (o) and (p) read

with section 29(3) of the National Environmental Management: Air Quality Act, 2004 (Act No. 39 of 2004) for implementation on the same day.

Section 3(1) of the Declaration of Greenhouse Gases as Priority Air Pollutants requires that a person conducting a production process which involves emission of greenhouse gases in excess of 0.1 Mega tonnes (Mt) annually, reported as carbon dioxide equivalents (CO₂-eq), and/or if so directed by the Minister, is to submit a pollution prevention plan (PPP) to the Minister for approval.

As soon as the Climate Change Bill is promulgated, the Department will publish Carbon Budgets and Mitigation Plans (currently known as Pollution Prevention Plans) Regulations together with the associated allocation methodology. These would be one set of Regulations linking the two instruments, and should be applicable for the second phase of the process, likely to start from 1st of January 2023.

- b) The Department supported the work of the National Planning Commission (NPC) to develop a national vision of a Just Transition to a low carbon economy and climate-resilient society by 2050.

In September 2020, the Cabinet approved the establishment of the Presidential Climate Change Coordinating Commission (PCCCC) to coordinate and oversee the just transition in the country, and the Terms of Reference (ToR) guiding the work to be carried out by the Commission. The Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries has been entrusted to work with Presidency to establish the PCCCC.

One of the first tasks of the PCCCC is to understand the impact of climate change on jobs, both positive and negative, and climate change responses by sector and location. As such, the Departments of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF); and of Trade, Industry and Competition (the DTIC) (former Economic Development Department - EDD) jointly commissioned work on the National Employment Vulnerability Assessment (NEVA) and Sector Jobs Resilience Plans (SJRPs). The work prepares for implementation of the sector jobs resilience plans for sectors vulnerable to job losses as a result of climate change responses. The aim of this work is to ensure

that the resulting economic and social burdens are not shifted onto vulnerable people and communities.

Regards



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

DATE: 19/11/2020