THURSDAY, 11 JULY 2019

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE MINI PLENARY SESSION – OLD ASSEMBLY CHAMBER

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Members of the mini-plenary session met in the Old Assembly Chamber at 19:00.

House Chairperson Mr C T Frolick took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayer or meditation.

APPROPRIATION BILL

Debate on Vote No 27 – Environmental Affairs:

The MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES: Hon House Chair, hon Deputy Minister Ms Makhotso Sotyu, chairperson of the portfolio committee hon Fikile Xasa, hon members of the portfolio committee, members of the executive councils of provinces, Director-General Ms Nosipho Ngcaba, chairpersons and chief executives of public entities, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, it is an honour to table before this House today the first Budget Policy Statement for the Department of Environment, soon to also include Forestry and Fisheries.

Just six weeks ago, President Cyril Ramaphosa acknowledged at his inauguration that South Africans had, on 8 May this year, chosen hope over hopelessness. He said that we all want action and not just words and promises, and that it is through action that we will create the society for which so many have fought and sacrificed and for which all of us yearn.

During the course of this Sixth Administration, this government has prioritised actions that will promote social and economic transformation, fight poverty and inequality, and create work, particularly for those entering the labour market for the first time.

Ours is a collective vision of a South Africa in which no person goes hungry, in which our economy grows faster than our population, in which two million more young people will be in employment, in which our schools will have better educational outcomes, and in which violent crime will be halved.

From an environmental perspective, it is our mandate to facilitate an economic growth path that is equitable, inclusive, sustainable and environmentally sound, a path that, in line with our Constitution, promotes sustainable development and the right of all to enjoy an environment that is not harmful to our health or wellbeing.

Our debate takes place today in a context in which, in recent times, the world has seen schoolchildren, including in our own country, organising strikes to demonstrate against adult inaction to address the risks that irreversible and dangerous climate change pose to their futures. These young people insist that we talk about a climate emergency and not just about climate change. Their actions are motivated by an understanding that global warming and its resultant climate change threaten the underpinnings of our economies and our social fabric.

The youth insist that taking such action to keep global temperatures below a 1.5°C rise over pre-industrial levels is essential for our survival as humankind.

In his state of the nation address three weeks ago, President Ramaphosa said:

> Together with all the nations of the world, we are confronted by the most devastating changes in global climate in human history.
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> The extreme weather conditions associated with the warming of the atmosphere threaten our economy, they threaten the lives and the livelihoods of our people and, unless we act now, will threaten our very existence.

Ladies and gentlemen, more than two million South Africans are directly dependent on natural resources and the natural environment for their income. These figures include almost 900 000 who work in agriculture, 600 000 who depend on fisheries and activities linked to our oceans, and almost 400 000 who rely on various aspects of the biodiversity economy. Hundreds of thousands more are employed in the value chains associated with these industries.

When we take into account that each of these breadwinners probably supports between eight and 10 others, we start to understand the true significance of our natural resources to our economic and social wellbeing.

These natural assets are under unprecedented threat from climate change, environmental degradation and the loss of our biodiversity. We know that here, as elsewhere in the world, those living under conditions of poverty and vulnerability will be hardest hit by drought, floods and extreme temperatures. These people will also have the least capacity to adapt to climate change. These realities have been recognised by the Global Risks Report tabled at successive meetings of the World Economic Forum in Davos.

Since 2012, climate change extreme weather events and water supply crises have featured in the top five risks in terms of both the likelihood of these events occurring and the consequences of their happening. But all is not lost. For the first time, the world has

agreed on a set of Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs, that have turned the often misused term of sustainable development into a real and practical vision for the future — a practical vision that is clearly reflected in our National Development Plan, Vision 2030.

Our country will submit its first voluntary report on progress we have made in implementing the SDGs later this month.

We are living in a time when renewable energy technology is becoming both more effective and cheaper by the day, a time when electric vehicles are becoming mainstream, an era when a circular economy is a practical and affordable alternative to the unsustainable take-make-use-dispose model that is at the root of many of our current problems.

The National Development Plan requires us to leave future generations an environmental endowment of at least equal value to the one we have now. No single government department, entity or municipality can do this alone.

The work of building a sustainable and environmentally sound growth path is the work of the nation as a whole. It will require all spheres of government, business, organised labour and civil society to come together in a programme of joint action.

In line with our understanding that our climate change response has to involve all sectors of society, the second draft of our Climate Change Bill is currently being discussed and debated at the National Economic Development and Labour Council, Nedlac. The Bill aims to create a framework to implement the Vision 2030 call for a just transition to a climate resilient and lower carbon economy and society.

Hence, its objectives are to provide a co-ordinated and integrated response to climate change, to provide for the effective management of an inevitable climate change impact and to make a fair contribution to the global effort to stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations.

Right now, such far-reaching change is hard to imagine. Society at large is worried about immediate issues of energy security, job losses and retrenchments. This means that while we debate the Climate Change Bill, we must of necessity also discuss the objectives and the process of the just transition itself and ensure that it takes place in an orderly manner. We must tread this, our future path towards 2050, while maintaining energy security and creating employment.

We must begin now to invest in essential research and development to create the new businesses and skills needed. This will enable

existing industries and their workforces to manage change proactively in ways that create new jobs and create growth.

Teamwork and partnerships must also guide how we ensure that we comply with our national ambient air quality standards.

In the priority areas of the Highveld, Vaal Triangle and Waterberg, the public are calling for immediate action. At our strategic planning session this past Monday, we agreed to review our priority area air quality management plans and their implementation.

Going forward, we must set up a multi-stakeholder implementation partnership, including at the highest levels of government. I have already written to Minister Mantashe and Minister Gordhan in this regard.

The management of waste and, in particular, single-use plastic, is a matter that also requires our most urgent and pressing attention. Our plastic bag regulations and the plastic bag levy are two mechanisms government has used to influence consumer behaviour and reduce littering. This is clearly not sufficient.

The department is currently assessing single-use plastic products and we will be conducting various stakeholder engagements in this regard.

We want to see consumers challenging their favourite stores, we want to see retailers challenging their suppliers and we want to see suppliers coming up with real and sustainable solutions. With the proper co-ordination and consumer action, voluntary change can be both sustainable and cost-effective.

Happily, our plastics industry is already looking at local innovations to give these products a second sustainable life in amongst other things, the building, construction and furniture-making industries.

Importantly, the global plastic waste crisis challenges the take-make-use-dispose approach to production and consumption. There is no waste in a circular economy — when we have finished with something it becomes the raw material for something else.

Our Chemicals and Waste Economy Phakisa is the key circular economy component of our just transition to fully sustainable development. The plan includes increasing the volume of waste diverted from landfills to beneficiation processes.

As agreed at the Jobs Summit in October 2018, the department is studying 49 applications for the beneficiation of waste including slag from the ferrochrome sector, ash from combustion plants, and gypsum, paper and cardboard.

While we find ways to reduce waste in our landfills, we must also find ways to clean up our communities and improve our public open spaces. When President Ramaphosa launched the Good Green Deeds Programme earlier this year, he spoke about Rwanda, a country where the community takes pride in keeping their public spaces clean.

Many provincial and local governments already have clean-up campaigns. Our intention is that under the banner of the Good Green Deeds Campaign, we should unite and massify these campaigns into a national effort to clean up our country.

South Africa is one of the 30 driest countries in the world. This phenomenon has been intensified by a prolonged drought. A critical programme aimed at improving our water security is the control of invasive plants in our catchments and wetlands. Recent research estimates that protection and clearing of river catchments can increase our water supply by as much as one sixth, at a fraction of the cost of other projects such as desalination.

The Working for Water Programme has cleared and maintained almost 3,5 million hectares of land over the past 25 years. This work will be intensified this year in both our key catchment and wetland areas, with 190 wetlands scheduled for repair.

Wetlands and estuaries also play a crucial role in flood management. Accordingly, the department is working with other affected

departments and entities on a joint wetlands framework to improve wetland protection, management and conservation in an integrated manner.

This year, our environmental programmes will create 67 000 work opportunities. A particular emphasis is on assisting young people in rural areas to enter the labour market for the first time and, accordingly, 65% of all opportunities will be set aside for those under the age of 35. Much more work must be done to ensure that, as youth exit these programmes, they have been adequately equipped for permanent productive activities.

We are fortunate that our country has a well-developed suite of policy and legislation for the management, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Preserving our natural wealth for future generations complements and contributes to our nation’s scientific achievements, as we finalise a new 140 000-hectare national park around the Square Kilometre Array in the Northern Cape.

Illegal poaching and illicit wildlife trade continue to threaten both our conservation and sustainable use efforts. Accordingly, the time has come for us to review our efforts together with our sister departments in the security and justice cluster.

We need better controls at our ports of exit, more support in the war on the ground and faster prosecution of offenders. We must also redouble our efforts to make sure that communities who live on the borders of our parks benefit from conservation and the biodiversity economy so they are not vulnerable to recruitment by syndicated poaching operations.

Accordingly, the department has set ambitious targets to transform the biodiversity economy during this Sixth Administration. As part of the national stimulus package, our department is supporting 107 projects with infrastructure such as game fencing, water reticulation, game donations, training and capacity-building for new and emerging game farmers.

To optimise the economic development and job-creation potential of our indigenous plant wealth, initiatives like the BioProducts Advancement Network SA, BioPANZA, are aimed at working with industry and conservation to ensure that rural women in particular benefit from both the intellectual property rights of indigenous knowledge systems and the cultivation and harvesting of indigenous plants.

Our Flagship Oceans Phakisa Programme has so far contributed R120 billion or 4,5% to our GDP. Currently, it sustains 676 000 jobs across the ocean-related sectors. By 2024, we hope that the facilitated ocean economic activities and investments will contribute R143 billion to GDP and sustain 780 000 jobs.

The recently gazetted network of 20 new Marine Protected Areas increases our protective refuges of our Exclusive Economic Zone. These areas will help to sustain fisheries for long-term food and job security.

It is important to repeat the point that we made in the interaction we had with those from fishing communities about three weeks ago, when we said that we would review the fishing rights allocation process 2020, of the Frap 2020, which will see the reissuing of licences for 12 of the 22 fisheries.

This decision has been taken following consultation with the sector and is aimed at ensuring that we follow all regulatory and legislative requirements. It is essential that the process is seen to be fair, open and transparent. It must promote the transformation of the sector and create sustainable livelihoods for the many coastal communities who have no other means of support. The process of transferring both Fisheries and Forestry to our department is at an advanced stage.

Effective compliance and enforcement underpins environmental justice and the integrity of our regulatory system. Upholding environmental rights and combating environmental crime in all its forms contributes to our efforts as a government to ensure social cohesion, safety and security.

At the same time, as part of the collective effort to reduce the impact red tape has on economic activity, we are consolidating and streamlining regulatory processes, automating permitting and developing other applications to reduce the cost of compliance.

We have also embarked on a programme of strategic environmental assessments to support the strategic integrated projects and government priority areas.

As I conclude, allow me to thank the director-general and her team, as well as all of those who work in our agencies for their ongoing commitment to environmental protection and the sustainable use of our natural resources.

This is the month of July, a month when we traditionally honour our former head of state and father of our nation, the late President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. For this reason, I thought it fitting to end with his wise words. He said, and I quote:

> Our people are bound up with the future of our land. Our national renewal depends upon the way we treat our land, our water, our sources of energy, and the air we breathe.
>
> ... Let us restore our country in a way that satisfies our descendants as well as ourselves.

I thank you. [Applause.]

Mr F D XASA: Hon House Chairperson, hon Minister Barbara Creecy, hon Deputy Minister Maggie Sotyu, hon members especially members of the committee, the environment sector family, ladies and gentlemen, may I take this moment to extend to all of you, on behalf of the Portfolio Committee on Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, a warm welcome to the first annual debate of the Budget Vote of the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries.

I would like to clarify the fact that we are specifically focusing on Budget Vote 27, the Budget of the Department of Environmental Affairs. The Minister has tried to clarify the processes to how and when are we likely to deal with everything else that constitutes the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries.

Hon Chairperson, I would like to start this debate by thanking all the members of the portfolio committee for their integrity, diligence, intellectual vigour and the frankness with which they participated in the discussions on the Budget. I foresee us working together irrespective of our political affiliation.

We might not always agree on certain details of how certain things have to be done, but there is much hope for us to agree on strategic issues pertaining to the environment because environmental sustainability benefits us all. Environmental damage imposes great

social costs on us all and affects our international image as a country. It is in this context that I'm truly grateful to all members of the committee, and I look forward to further constructive interactions with you as we decisively represent our people.

Hon Chairperson, I would like to repeat and support the departmental prognosis that the department is a high-performing department that serves with integrity as the custodian of South Africa's environment that should be bequeathed to future generations in a manner that encourages its sustainability indefinitely.

Although being new in the committee, we could still see that the department had established a very good record of unqualified audit opinions ever since it came into existence as a separate department in the 2010-11 financial year. In the two past financial years, the department started experiencing serious challenges in meeting audit requirements as they relate to modified cash standards.

We know that those challenges occurred due to the classification of transfer of payments that the department makes annually to Expanded Public Works Programme projects, or EPWP projects. Therefore, in essence, the department's challenges have been rather of an accounting nature; they don't talk to the issue of integrity.

However, having interacted with you, hon Minister, and your team during the processing of this budget, we are satisfied that the

department is in capable hands, considering the calibre of the executive management and the technical personnel under your leadership and authority, and also your assurance to the members of the committee that the matter of a clean audit was receiving your personal attention.

We recognise that the department fulfils its mandate mainly through policy-making on matters of the environment and also through co-ordination and monitoring of the implementation of national environmental policies, programmes and legislation with additional support from its four entities: the iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority; the SA National Biodiversity Institute, Sanbi; the SA National Parks, SANParks; and the SA Weather Service, Saws.

We considered and appreciated the purposeful structuring of the department into seven programmes to ensure the effective achievement of its constitutional mandate. It is easy to see that the seven different programmes and their purposes are reflective of the different focus areas in light of the ongoing challenges that face all the different aspects of our environment.

Hon Chairperson, the South African environment is a vehicle for many key sectors that constitute a core part of our national economic engine. For example, the way in which we respond to the threats of climate change will influence whether we can continue to export our

agricultural produce to our traditional markets up north without being subjected to carbon border tax adjustments.

Similarly, how we manage our biodiversity and maintain our status as an iconic diversity conservation destination country will define whether we continue to receive increasing numbers of international tourists or not. The environment does more than just provide raw materials for economic production.

It is in this regard that we argue that the contribution of the environment must be holistically evaluated in deciding the levels of funding for this invaluable sector, considering the supportive nature of this sector for other economically viable sectors and also for the positive impact the environment has on our wellbeing or health. In this regard, the Constitution clearly states in section 24(a) that everyone has the right to an environment that is not harmful to their health or wellbeing.

In conclusion, I would like to indicate that as the chairperson of the committee and as a member of the ANC and on behalf of my very own committee, I support the Budget Vote allocation of R7,5 billion to the Department of Environmental Affairs. I thank you. [Applause.]

Mr J R B LORIMER: Mr Chair, there are some things we look for from this portfolio. Firstly, it must work out how South Africa’s environmental resources can be harnessed in the best way to provide

a path out of poverty for as many of our people as possible. Use of the environment must be sustainable or it is pointless. Government must ensure that in climbing out of poverty, we do not create a wasteland that is unhealthy or not worth living in. Unique aspects of our environmental legacy are a birthright that our citizens should have an opportunity to experience.

Money allocated for these tasks should be well spent. A first look at the department charged with these tasks shows a decidedly mixed bag. I understand that it is natural not to talk about your failures, but the absence of the word “adverse”, in relation to its audit findings from the department’s report to last week’s committee meetings, was amateurish and has presented a credibility problem that will endure.

What was strange was the ANC’s rather muted reaction to this. We heard the chairman’s overgenerous attitude towards the department in this regard. This is billions of rand of the people’s money. The department missed the deadline to submit its figures. The Auditor-General doesn’t know where the money went. This is not a *smallanyana* mistake. This is a big deal!

Mumbled explanations about a change in accounting practices do not hide the vast amounts of money that cannot be properly accounted for. This amounts to managerial incompetence on a massive scale. If we can’t trust the department to be straight with Parliament as it

conducts oversight, it will cast doubt on everything the department does.

Corruption is powered by graft, encouraged by a lack of consequence and enabled by mismanagement. This must be cleaned up, and quickly.

If you want start to tackle corruption you need look no further than the award of a SANParks tender to Thebe Tourism for the Kruger Shalati Train on a Bridge Hotel at Skukuza in the Kruger National Park. In case anybody needs reminding, Thebe Tourism is a subsidiary of Thebe Investments of which the largest shareholder at almost 50% is the Batho Batho Trust. The sole beneficiary of the trust is the ANC. [Interjections.]

So, here you have the ANC government running an entity – SANParks - giving a tender to itself! That’s not quite criminal behaviour, but it should be. It is certainly unethical. The officials involved in the award of this tender should be investigated and disciplined. If you do this, it shows you are serious about oversight.

If the Minister is truly concerned with outing the rot in the entities in her new department, she should introduce lifestyle audits of officials and follow through with investigations of those who have unexplained wealth. It doesn’t have to be everybody, but if you do a random audit of a number of officials every month, it will soon encourage good behaviour.

In his state of the nation speech the President put forward the ambitious plan of doubling our tourism in the next 11 years. It is a laudable aim and speaks directly to an area where this department can have the most impact on our unemployment crisis. If we are to receive tourists, many of whom will come to view our rich wildlife heritage, we will need to expand the land area that is allocated to protected conservation areas. We will be urging the authorities to focus on this as a major goal. I hope this is part of the plan the Minister spoke of.

There are many areas of the country that have the potential to be declared national parks or to be conservancies, some of them privately owned, that could be integrated with our national park system to create large areas where biodiversity can be enhanced and protected. It is going to be important when we do this to ensure that areas designated for preservation are not degraded by other activities. To this end, I believe we should be looking at legislation that ensures a barrier zone that will keep activities like mining away from the direct boundaries of our parks.

A case in point is the proposal for a giant coal mine directly on the southern border of the Kruger National Park. This is an area which provides major tourism earnings, which would be destroyed if the noise and dust of an open pit were recklessly permitted. Barrier zone legislation that specifies exact exclusion zones around exactly

which protected areas will provide a degree of legislative certainty for prospective miners that is currently missing.

There is another anomaly in our mining licensing process where the mining department is also the authorising authority on environmental permits for mines. The Department of Mineral Resources, or DME as it is now, does not have the expertise or the capacity to properly perform this function. I know because I have just spent seven years in that portfolio. This should be carried out by the people who can do it; that means the Department of Environmental Affairs as is the case incidentally with the majority of mining jurisdictions worldwide.

Mining has left a historic legacy of environmental damage. When things go wrong, as with the disgraceful official neglect of the bad operational practices at Mintails on the West Rand, the environmental authorities should be empowered and capacitated to act. The business rescue practitioners have no duty to account for environmental damage. In the end, the liability will become the problem of the environmental authority. Efforts to amend rules covering this situation should be fast tracked.

South Africa’s natural heritage is an asset that belongs to all our people. When somebody poaches a rhino, they are stealing from all of our people. But are we winning the battle against rhino poaching? We don’t know. The official line seems to be that poaching has

declined, but by how much? Some of it may be due to improved law enforcement, but there is the disquieting suggestion that rhino poaching is down because there are simply fewer rhinos to be found in our national parks.

It is time for the department to be transparent on this issue. We need to know how many rhinos are left in our national parks and whether their numbers are growing or shrinking. If their numbers are shrinking, then the department needs to come up with a plan that will save the future of the rhinos.

There are other forms of wildlife trafficking too, which need to be given more attention than they are currently getting. These are just a few of the big issues that confront our environment. My colleagues will focus on others. These issues need to be addressed and the place to start is with ensuring an honest and capable department. Until that happens, Minister, chances of success are regrettably remote. [Applause.]

Mnr M N PAULSEN: Baie dankie. Ek weet nie wat sê die tannie met die stukkende hare hier in die hoekie nie! [Gelag.] *(Translation of Afrikaans paragraph follows)*

[Mr M N PAULSEN: Thank you very much. I don't know what the aunty with the brittle hair in the corner was saying! [Laughter.]]

Good afternoon, Chairperson ...

Ms A STEYN: Please ask the member to withdraw. I know he didn’t mention a name, but he pointed directly and used derogatory terms.

Mr M N PAULSEN: Yes, I heard someone here in the corner ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Paulsen ...
[Interjections.]

Mr M N PAULSEN: I am not going to pay attention to this nonsense, Chairperson ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Paulsen, let’s observe the Rules of the House. Withdraw the remark please.

Mr M N PAULSEN: Chairperson, this lady made a stupid comment here. The idiot with the broken hair, but anyway ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Withdraw the remark.

Mr M N PAULSEN: Okay.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Thank you. Continue, hon member.

Mr M N PAULSEN: Thank you very much, Chairperson. The white workers are hounding me today.

Chairperson, I like the name of this department: Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, EFF. And you're all welcome and congratulations, Minister, on your appointment as the Minister of EFF. [Laughter.]

Chairperson, at this moment, more than any time in history, we are faced with the greatest threat to human existence the world has ever known. Human-induced global warming will completely change the world as we know it and force us to reimagine our existence.

One of the most tragic consequences of our fixation with consumer-driven development has been our inability to imagine and implement a developmental programme that prioritises the protection of the integration of our ecosystem. We face the challenges of global warming and climate variability, loss of biodiversity, deforestation, desertification, land degradation, waste and littering, population growth, urbanisation, pollution, poverty and health hazards.

While South Africa seems to be doing more than its counterparts in engendering an environmental awareness ethic, we can do better and we ought to do better, but only if we can eliminate corruption and

narrow short-termism in the manner the department does its operations.

Here in South Africa, the root cause of environmental crises is located in the racial dispossession of African land, the colonial creation of national parks and nature reserves and the ownership of land and property by a tiny settler minority. This has led to millions of South Africans staying in rat-infested, flea-ridden shacks in areas like Joe Slovo here in Cape Town, where they don't get much service from the DA-run Cape Town, as is the case with Alexandra in Johannesburg, which is also run by the DA.

In many other townships there isn't even space for planting trees. In areas in Mpumalanga and around Johannesburg, we have the real problem of acid mine drainage, and despite there being legal provisions to prevent this, there is no real desire from the government to rein these companies in. We need the department of the EFF to have the mandate and the willingness to go hard on mining companies - they must go hard - that do not exercise care to guarantee zero percent pollution of our water resources and prevent acid mine drainage.

Mining companies must be held accountable legally and must be made to pay for the damage any of their activities has on people's lives. Those mines found to be still using silicosis-causing compounds must have their mining licences revoked. This must apply to other

notorious polluters as well. Sasol must be forced to pay reparations to the people of Sasolburg, who are at the receiving end of pollution from the Sasol plant there.

While facing this environmental crisis, our environmental agencies have been progressively weakened by both the ANC and the DA.

Here in the Western Cape, the provincial conservation agency CapeNature decided to dissolve their scientific services, which were the bedrock of conservation planning and research. There is no plausible justification for this.

In the Eastern Cape, the Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency has, over the years, been reduced to a cash cow for its now departing chief executive officer.

At a national level, the SA National Biodiversity Institute has been beset by poor leadership, racism and the inability to retain skilled black people. These institutions are in crisis and require bold leadership.

Now, Minister, I'm going to give the advice I give to any new Minister. If you really want to make a difference ... [Interjections.] ... you must fear nothing, especially not white monopoly capital.

At a practical policy level, there are immediate things that can be done to fight environmental degradation, and these are: rapidly increase the protected area network to ensure that all representative ecosystems unique to South Africa are preserved and protected; integrate local community forums in the management of protected areas to ensure that local people are not excluded from the management of protected areas in their localities; and streamline environmental authorisation procedures to ensure that the department of EFF becomes the only authority that is able to grant authorisation for mining, property development and other forms of development. In addition, environmental impact assessments must not be nice-to-have assessments; they must be authoritative. Also, through strengthened legislation, we must ensure that mining companies that have abandoned mines are forced to come back and rehabilitate denuded mining landscapes. We must officially adopt a civil-society-driven, one-million-climate-jobs initiative as a government programme and promote the transition in South Africa from coal-based energy sources to renewable energy. We must also introduce a massive tree-planting campaign across the country as planting trees is the only defence we have against climate change. We must give tax incentives to companies that will subsidise tree-planting activities around areas where they operate. And, lastly, we must only use establishments that have demonstrated commitment to using clean energy and recycling water and other disposables.

Your budget, Minister, unfortunately lacks imagination. The EFF, therefore, rejects this budget. [Applause.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): The next speaker is the hon Singh.

[Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon members ... Hon members! Continue, hon Singh.

Mr N SINGH: Thank you very much, hon Chairperson ...

Mr M N PAULSEN: Chairperson, hon Singh ... my apologies.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Why are you rising, hon member?

Mr M N PAULSEN: Chairperson, if these guys here on this side are not going to behave, I will make them behave. So, you must tell them.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): I think that what you should do is raise the issues with me. I’m in charge of the session and I will make sure they behave. Thank you very much.

Mr M N PAULSEN: Chairperson, would you spare me then and make them behave.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Have a seat. Thank you very much.

Mr N SINGH: Chairperson, on behalf of the IFP, I wish to congratulate, firstly, the Minister and the Deputy Minister on their respective appointments to this very critical portfolio. Make no mistake about it, Ministers, we are in deep overdraft with respect to the demands we as humanity are placing on this planet's natural resources. We err continually on the side of economic growth before environmental sustainability, despite the growing body of evidence suggesting otherwise; in essence, short-term wins that overshadow long-term goals ultimately leading to final losses.

We are the principal actors in the ongoing poisoning of our environment through the use of genetically modified organism, GMOs, and here I refer to GMO maize and weed killers such as glyphosate. Even the use of other technologies, such as the possible dangers posed by 5G technology communications networks, which combined could very well be extremely detrimental not only to our health and wellbeing now, but, more importantly, to that of our future generations.

Independent environmental and health studies need to be conducted urgently by your department in this regard, Minister. The precautionary principle needs to be applied before it’s too late in order to properly implement forward-planning mechanisms.

Mr Gaylord Nelson aptly states that, and I quote:

> The ultimate test of man's conscience may be his willingness to sacrifice something today for the future generations whose words of thanks will not be heard.

Chairperson, such a tipping point is upon us. We can either take heed or we can ignore it and place our societies and planet, in what Ms Inger Andersen from the United Nations Environment Programme, described in a recent address as, I quote, “imminent peril”.

Next week, our country will present its first progress report on the Sustainable Development Goals, which will give us an indication of our progress as a nation towards the 169 targets agreed upon by 193 UN member states. Have we done enough? Where are we doing well and where are we failing? We shall see on 17 July.

In the words of President Ramaphosa, and I quote: Now is the time for implementation not rhetoric! We are at the precipice, and we must exercise environmental precaution in all we do.

This is paramount.

Chairperson, science must inform and underpin all that we do as a country regarding environmental legislation and regulation.

I now turn to marine protected areas, MPAs, which the hon Minister referred to. Credit must be given to former Minister Edna Molewa - may her soul rest in peace - for her work in increasing MPAs, from 0,43% to 0,5% in South Africa. We, as the IFP, would like to see this percentage at least double in the coming five years. And credit must also go to our new Minister, Ms Barbara Creecy, for her swift action in suspending the octopus fishing licences issued in False Bay after the numerous and unnecessary deaths of iconic whale species that occurred in the bay – when whales became entangled in octopus trap lines. This practice must be banned for its damage, not only to the decimation of octopus numbers in the area, but also in respect of the collateral damage to other iconic marine life species in the bay. We hope the removal of these traps will be expedited. False Bay must be protected and designated a marine protected area, Minister.

In moving forward, this department must ensure a balance between economic growth and sustainable development, the protection of biodiversity, the development of clean energy and the reduction of air pollution. Single-use plastics must be banned immediately, and

the foundations must be laid firmly for a sustainable, healthy and thriving environment.

We must accelerate our resolve to stop elephant and rhino poaching, as well as canned lion hunting. A United Nations report on this issue suggests that, and I quote: Many multinational criminal networks are making phenomenal profits from environmental crime. It is a financing machine.

Our effectiveness to deal with this scourge must be accompanied by properly resourced compliance and enforcement programmes. Sadly, this is the least funded departmental programme, and, therefore, Minister, more needs to be done in this regard.

We have but one earth, we share it in common and we therefore all share the responsibilities of its environmental protection, now and into perpetuity.

Hon Minister, as the IFP we support this budget. We would like to see an increase in the budget so that we can accelerate enforcement and compliance, and ensure that the mandate of this department is properly executed. I thank you. [Applause.]

Dr W J BOSHOFF: Hon Chairman and hon members, in quantitative surveys academics tell us that respondents tend to regard everything as very important. If you ask them how important their children’s

health is, it is very important. If you ask them how important time spent with the children is, it's very important. The quality of food that they eat is also very important. But, in fact, if you look at the choices that they make, it might be that what is very important is to get their children out from under their feet. And that is the way it is with our population regarding environmental affairs.

If you ask people how important biodiversity is, it is very important. If you ask people how important the sustainable development of our coastline and marine environment is, it is very important. But people are not willing to pay – especially if they are given a choice between something which was produced in an environmentally sustainable way, and a cheaper product of a similar quality, but with a different and less viable or less sustainable method of production.

Therefore, we need, in fact, a Department of Environmental Affairs to be the custodian of the complete habitat that we all inhabit. If it was not necessary, there might have been R7,5 billion to spend on something else. The Minister quoted how many people are dependent on the environment for their sustenance. Of course, this is actually also something like 7,2 billion people because everyone is dependent on our natural environment.

Dit gebeur terwyl daar 'n klimaatkrisis soos 'n stoomtrein besig is om op ons af te kom, en dit lyk asof ons nie wil padgee nie. Die

wetenskaplike kundigheid oor wat nodig is om gedoen te word is algemeen bekend. Dit is nie ’n geheim wat êrens weggesteek word nie. Eintlik is dit betreklik eenvoudig.

Daar is natuurlik ... Dit is ongelooflik gesoffistikeerd ook, maar op ’n manier kan jy sê dat as ons minder koolstofbronne in die vorm van fossielbrandstowwe, wat verbrand word, sekwestreer en as ons meer koolsuurgas bind in die vorm van bome of ander meer tegnologiese maniere, dan gaan ons hierdie geweldige groot probleem van klimaatverandering kan voorkom, en tog doen ons dit nie.

Ons is besig met ’n weggooiekonomie, waar ons eintlik, as ons na ons keuses kyk, nie ’n duiwel kan omgee oor wat met die planeet gebeur nie, en dit terwyl ons en ons nageslag veronderstel is om hier te woon.

Ek dink as ’n mens vir jouself ’n eenvoudige manier wil kry oor hoe om daarna te kyk, dan kyk mens na die vier klassieke elemente: aarde, lug, water en vuur.

Ten opsigte van aarde, is jy besig om die grond op te pas? Enige keuse, of dit nou ’n klein verbruikersitem is en of dit die ontwikkeling van ’n multimiljardrand mynprojek is, is dit is besig om die grond te bevoordeel of is dit besig om die grond te beroof?

Lug, wat stel ons vry in die lug? Wat haal ons uit die lug uit? Dit is baie blangrik. Dit gaan oor die atmosfeer. Ten opsigte van water, dink ek dis vanselfsprekend en vuur is ons energiebronne. Dit is ons gebruik van energie in die finale instansie wat besig is om ons bestaan op aarde ontmoontlik te maak.

Dit is vreeslik lekker om die goedjies te sê. Hier staan ons nou in die Parlement. Ek kan eintlik niks rondom my sien wat nie uit ’n fabriek uit kom nie, behalwe die mense. ’n Mens wonder waar om te begin. Dit is ’n oulike toestel waarin ons water vervoer. Sou dit nie moontlik wees dat die Parlement ’n goeie voorbeeld stel en begin om glasbekers met kraanwater op ons tafels neer te sit nie? Sodoende, drink ons sommer gehaltewater wat enige iemand anders in die stad drink en hou ons op om honderde van hierdie botteltjies elke dag in die asblik te gooi. Ek wil juis graag weet of hierdie herwin word. Beland dit maar net op die Kaapstadse afvalterrein? Ek weet regtig nie. Dit interesseer my.

Baie dankie en mag die toekomstige geslagte nog veilig en gelukkig hier op aarde woon! *(Translation of Afrikaans paragraphs follows)*

[This happens while a climate crisis is approaching us like a steam train, and it seems as if we do not want to make way. The scientific expertise on what needs to be done is well known. It's not a secret that is hidden somewhere. Actually, it's relatively simple.

There are, of course ... It's incredibly sophisticated too, but in a way you can say that if we sequester less carbon sources in the form of fossil fuels that are burned, and if we bind more carbon dioxide in the form of trees or other more technological ways, we will be able to prevent this huge problem of climate change, and yet we are not doing this.

We are busy with a throw-away economy where, when we look at our choices, we could not care less about what is happening to the planet, despite the fact that we and our descendants are supposed to live here.

If you want to find a simple way, for yourself, to look at it, then you have to look at the four classic elements: earth, air, water and fire.

With regard to the earth, are you looking after the soil? You have to ask that of any choice, whether it is a small consumer item or whether it is the development of a multibillion rand mining project - is it benefiting the land or is it destroying the land?

When it comes to air, what are we releasing into the air? What do we take out of the air? It is very important. It’s about the atmosphere. In terms of water, I think it goes without saying, and fire is our energy source. It is our use of energy in the final instance that is making our existence on earth impossible.

It's very nice to say these things. Here we are now, in Parliament. I can’t really see anything around me that doesn’t come from a factory, except the people. One wonders where to start. This is a lovely contraption in which we carry water. Wouldn’t it be possible for Parliament to set a good example and start putting glass jugs of tap water on our tables? As a result, we simply drink the quality water that everyone else in the city drinks and stop throwing hundreds of these bottles in the bin every day. I would really like to know if this is being recycled. Does it just end up in a Cape Town landfill site? I really don't know. It interests me.

Thank you and may future generations still live safely and happily here on earth!]

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES: Chairperson, hon Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries Ms Barbara Creecy, chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Environment, Forestry and Fisheries the hon Fikile Xasa, hon Members of Parliament, members of the portfolio committee, all MECs present, Director-General Ms Nosipho Ngcaba and her team, all board chairs and chief executives of the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, public entities, our key stakeholders, ladies and gentlemen, one of the key stakeholders who sent letters of congratulations to our new Ministry was Greenpeace Africa Executive Director Mr Njeri Kabeberi.

This congratulatory letter deserves a special mention not only because Greenpeace Africa is one of our key stakeholders and partners in discharging our constitutional mandate of protecting the people's right to a clean environment, as guaranteed by section 24 of our Constitution, but also because Greenpeace Africa went on to specifically and precisely lay out all the issues that need to be prioritised by our newly amalgamated Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, specifically mentioning the concerns of climate change, air pollution, global warming, ocean vulnerability, and underdeveloped policies and legislation. This is the kind of social activism that is much needed by our government as a healthy environment requires concerted action from all sectors of society.

Issues of climate change and pollution, and related big words such as biodiversity and ecosystems, can easily be seen as just other academic and far-fetched phenomena, far from the immediate realities of our communities. Most people have other things to worry about and partly because the grave consequences of climate change, pollution and health hazards tend to be invisible, yet incremental until they suddenly become catastrophic through natural and unnatural disasters such as typhoons, forest fires, deadly diseases and severe drought.

Part of the problem is that these issues of climate change and pollution are either perceived as the concerns of other groups of people and nothing to do with immediate societal challenges such as

poverty, unemployment and economic growth, or they are alleged to be problems of the future. Neither could be further from the truth.

The fact of the matter is that biodiversity simply means that we need to acknowledge quickly that our existence and survival as the human species depends solely on the normal functioning of our weather system to get good rains for water, and on the sustainability of both land and sea animal species and that of the plant kingdom. This survival also depends on good governance and management of our land to ensure sustainable forests for habitable land and fertile soil for human and food security, and for animals' survival. This co-existence between humans, animals and nature is a social cohesion that was already envisioned by our national government with other fellow Southern African countries way back in 1999 through the establishment of Transfrontier Conservation Areas, TFCAs. These TFCAs were founded with the aim of collaboratively managing shared natural and cultural resources across international boundaries for improved biodiversity conservation, socioeconomic development, regional co-operation and integration for shared natural and cultural resources.

When I was appointed Deputy Minister in this department and came across these difficult words, I was very curious and called upon the deputy director-general responsible to explain to me what kinds of areas these were, only to discover that these are things that we are living with almost every day. This reminded me of a day when I was

still in the Department of Arts and Culture and visited an area in Fouriesburg. When I arrived in Fouriesburg on issues of arts and culture there were some old men and women who said to me I would have to wait for them for two hours because they had gone into Lesotho, along the borders of Fouriesburg.

Apho bathi basaye kulanda amayeza esiNtu. (*Translation of isiXhosa sentence follows*.)

[Where they said they were fetching traditional medicine.]

These were plantations across the borders in Lesotho. Then I said to myself, how come you leave South Africa and go to Lesotho to get some plantations? But when I joined this department, I understood why we needed to make sure that we looked after these kinds of cultural resources.

Consequently, the creation of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park on 12 May 2000 opened the first chapter of TFCAs in Southern Africa. Currently, South Africa is playing a leading role in the collaborative management of six TFCAs with Namibia, which we know we have borders with; Botswana, which we have borders with; Zimbabwe, which we know we have borders with especially from the Limpopo side; Lesotho, from the Free State side; Mozambique via Mpumalanga; and Swaziland.

The TFCAs' socioeconomic growth spin-offs through tourism are undisputable. Many renowned tourism destinations such as the Kruger National Park are already situated within the SADC TFCAs, which continue to generate economic growth and employment in the surrounding rural communities. And for this financial year 2019-20, the department will continue with our SADC partners to consolidate the work being undertaken in the TFCAs for the benefit of transboundary biodiversity conservation to address the challenges of rhino poaching, as has been mentioned, and illegal animal competition hunting, to name just a few. We will also explore other transboundary collaborations when it comes to World Heritage Sites and the programme on Biosphere Reserves.

Chairperson, the establishment of the TFCAs is human-made and very progressive. At the same time, their destruction will also be inevitably due to human activity or behaviour and will be catastrophic.

Therefore, good management and clean governance of the natural habitat is critically fundamental. That is why on 17 June 2019, South Africa joined the community of nations in celebrating 25 years of advancement in sustainable land management under the auspices of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

This fact must be known: there will be no TFCAs if animals lose their natural habitat through the irresponsible and illegal cutting

down of trees. It is well known and proven through scientific research that forests are very important for the sustenance of wildlife, and they play an important role in the food chain. Forests also play an important role in the water cycle. They check the flow of running water and cause rain to percolate through the soil, increasing the underground water level.

Owing to the numerous benefits and the products of the forests, it can be stated easily that forests are one of the invaluable gifts of nature to humankind. The stark reality is that 91% of South Africa is considered dry land, as mentioned by the Minister, which makes the country already vulnerable to the illegal cutting down of trees, desertification, land degradation and drought. All these conditions lead to loss of water and food security.

It is no wonder that we are seeing more urbanisation at a rapid rate, where rural populations start to move towards the cities owing to barren land and a lack of economic opportunities or activities. Indeed, it is also no wonder that Eskom is insisting on building more power coal-driven plants in a country where nearly 90% of the electricity comes from coal, along with major coal exports. That is why the department will have to be informed by an approach of balancing their act, as the Deputy Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy mentioned earlier this afternoon.

When responding to, and intervening in, all these challenges, there is no other approach than balancing our act if we are to meet and achieve Sustainable Development Goal: Towards a Land Degradation Neutral World, where there is no net loss by 2030.

In this instance, our department is currently implementing and improving on four of its programmes to meaningfully contribute to the conservation of South Africa's biodiversity and the socioeconomic development of the rest of SADC member states through programmes such as the TFCAs, as I mentioned earlier.

Under the auspices of the Expanded Public Works Programme, EPWP, the department continues to invest in core areas of focus such as the following: sustainable land management, the protection of forests, securing strategic water resources, and the restoration of degraded land.

The department will also be ensuring that broad-based black economic empowerment, BBBEE, and Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises, SMMEs, are efficiently supported for maximum economic growth and job creation, especially for our youth and women in business. While we are still in the process of the amalgamation of the department, we have observed that plantation forestry is another programme that seeks to enhance the existing natural forests and woodlands that South Africa has.

South Africa currently has about 1,2 million hectares of plantations. Some of these plantations are leased by government to private companies, and 3,7% of these hectares are owned by small growers. Forests' contribution is around 10% of the country's agricultural gross domestic product.

However, the balancing-act approach is critical for this programme as plantation forestry comes at a cost in terms of transformed land, water and soil impacts, fire risks and loss of biological diversity.

The Forest Stewardship Council and the implementation of its guidelines will thus go a long way towards bringing sustainability to the plantation forestry sector.

The Working on Fire Programme is another initiative to save our forests. How can we forget the 2017 devastating fires that destroyed the trees and greens of the Garden Route and Port Elizabeth where six lives were tragically lost in the process? An overarching national drought plan, awareness, advocacy and educational programmes will also be enhanced by the department to ensure that more people, including youth and learners, know well the seriousness and consequences of biodiversity loss and reductions in the ecosystem, and that they appreciate and converse with nature more.

The agroforestry strategy is an additional initiative that seeks to integrate forestry and agriculture on the same piece of land that holds a number of social, economic and environmental benefits.

Knowledge of the facts about our environment will definitely assist in our ability as a collective in terms of being compliant and having caring resilience on the inevitable threats brought about by climate change and air pollution. These are threats that have domino effects, multiplying too many other threats as mentioned by the Minister. We will thus ensure that our department will always act professionally and never with impunity in responding to complaints, concerns and compliments regarding our immediate mandate. Our motto should be: “Environmental Rights Are Human Rights” and, appropriately, 21 March is celebrated as International Day of Forests.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the hon Minister for already showing leadership in this short space of time in which we have assumed our new respective responsibilities in this rather difficult and technical portfolio. My gratitude also extends to our Director-General, Ms Nosipho Ngcaba, and the entire team in the department for welcoming us and for the support that has already been shown to us as the executive. Thanks, again, to the family of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries for such a warm welcome and acknowledging our MECs and chairpersons of the portfolio and select committees and

committee members. I want to say that we are here to serve the people of South Africa. I thank you. [Applause.]

Mr B H HOLOMISA: Chairperson, hon Minister and hon members, the UDM supports this Budget Vote. [Applause.]

As a result, we make the following suggestions. The UDM believes that through the implementation of biodiversity programmes thousands of jobs can be created. For instance, the introduction of "green battalions" could combat soil erosion, overgrazing and deforestation and also protect biodiversity, especially in rural South Africa.

We also propose that a national climate change green fund be established. Funds that are generated through avenues such as taxing new car owners should be channelled into this fund. In the same vein, the green fund managed by the Development Bank of Southern Africa, DBSA, must table their programmes especially those dealing with rural areas because we have a feeling that the green fund would be channelled to the big areas in the big cities.

The climate change fund could be made responsible for launching sustainable green projects that could create much-needed jobs, and it could also contribute towards our nation's food security.

It would be ideal if the Department of Environmental Affairs could co-ordinate and even chair any mega infrastructure development

projects, such as water, housing, forestry, roads and railways. At the moment, the departments operate in silos, each with different budgets and work objectives that might clash or have functionalities that are duplicated.

In conclusion, there must be a master plan that is adhered to with extreme discipline and that is co-ordinated at the highest level. This will help with better budgeting, ensure that universal timeframes are set and that progress is better measured. It's time that we consider establishing a presidential council on sustainable development whose task would be to co-ordinate developments in this country.

Part of this solution lies in consolidating the massive number of environmental laws and regulations into one concise and effective law. I thank you. [Applause.]

Ms H S WINKLER: Chairperson, what you see here may appear to be a simple plastic bottle, but I assure you it is far more ominous and scarier than what we realise. By 2050, it is said that there will be more plastic in our oceans than there will be fish. If this is not enough to alarm you, let me tell you research says we are ingesting one credit card worth of plastic per week. We are in the midst of an environmental catastrophe, yet of the national estimated expenditure for this year only 0,41% has been allocated to this department and this has remained rather static for almost the past five years. Of

this 0,41%, the amount spent on administration is 10 times more than what is spent on air quality management and more than seven times more than what is allocated to integrated waste management.

South Africans use between 30 kg and 50 kg of plastic per person per year, including this Parliament. Our land, our rivers, our oceans are drowning in plastic pollution. Plastics have been found in the deepest trenches of our oceans and in the bellies of our marine animals.

According to the World Wildlife Fund, only 10% of plastic waste is recycled in South Africa. Single-use plastics which include packets, sachets, wasteful packaging and micro beads ...

Mr T N MMUTLE: Point of order, Chair.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms V S Siwela): Hon member, could you allow her; it’s her maiden speech.

Mr T N MMUTLE: No, no, it is a point of order, Chair.

Ms H S WINKLER: Please stop my time. You are not giving me a fair chance to ... [Inaudible.] South Africans have elected me to this position. You have ruined our environment. Why can’t you fix it? [Interjections.]

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms V S Siwela): Hon member, sit down.

Mr T N MMUTLE: She has no right to say “our land”; it’s our land not your land. [Interjections.]

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms V S Siwela): Hon member ... [Interjections.] Hon members, order! Hon member, you can proceed.

Ms H S WINKLER: According to the World Wildlife Fund, only 10% of plastic waste is recycled in South Africa. Single-use plastics, which include packets, sachets, cosmetic beads and wasteful packaging, are polluting our environment. They are not a need. They are a scourge and should be treated as such. Almost 40% of plastics that find themselves in landfill sites are not recyclable because of their toxicity.

The only way to fix this, Minister, is through tough legislation and by not putting the onus or burden only on the consumer. That is your job. There is so much talk of job creation, but we sit on a goldmine of R17 billion worth of waste in our landfills. There are waste things that could be used to create thousands of jobs. Waste pickers should be organised and supported in their co-operatives. [Applause.]

The Department of Environmental Affairs instituted a plastic bag levy in 2004. Where is the money, Minister? Why is it not all being

channelled back to our department so that we can challenge and face all these challenges? Hon Minister, the environmental ethic that informs our relationship with this world is antiquated in our data. It must be revised. It is one of the most important questions of our generation and it is our moral obligation to do so for young people now and for future generations. Thank you. [Applause.]

Ms T V B MCHUNU: Hon Chair, hon Minister, hon Deputy Minister, chairperson, hon Members of Parliament, fellow citizens and the Department of Environmental Affairs, one of the seven priorities of the Sixth Administration is economic transformation and job creation.

President Ramaphosa, during his address to the people of South Africa, said that since 2014 the government has secured investment of nearly R30 billion and created over 7 000 new jobs. He said these investments have been mainly in infrastructure development and marine manufacturing, as well as in aquaculture. An expected investment of nearly R70 billion is expected within the next five years in the sector of the oceans economy and this is expected to create about 350 000 jobs within a five-year period.

Under Operation Phakisa Oceans Economy, we find latent potential to help ensure that within the next 10 years no single person will go hungry in South Africa. We have been given a beautiful coastline from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean, rich with natural resources

and minerals, yet to be fully tapped and exploited for the benefit of all our people.

We read in the Bible that Christ fed a multitude with one loaf of bread. We, today, look with great hope at the oceans economy to feed multitudes of our most vulnerable, poor and hungry people, some of whom live along our beautiful coastlines. Most of these communities rely on the coastline's natural resources to make a living, find employment and create jobs.

Chairperson, it is estimated that the total global market value of the oceans economy is worth about US$14 trillion. Given our vast coastal areas, our nation stands to benefit greatly, if only we explore this latent economy.

It is expected that by 2033 the total contribution to the country's GDP by the oceans economy will amount to about R177 billion and the potential high number of jobs created could be well over one million jobs by 2030.

Currently, the Department of Environmental Affairs continues to support and implement 35 aquaculture catalysts projects through the implementation of aquaculture development zones. However, it must not go without mention that the economic livelihood of the oceans economy depends heavily on adequate policy formulation that will deal with threats to the environmental quality of our oceans.

We are happy that the department has designed policies that are forward-looking and we will ensure protection and sustainability of our oceans' resources by conserving its ecosystems through the use of the new knowledge.

There is no greater need than to ensure the participation of the youth, women and people with disabilities in the oceans economy. This can be achieved through public awareness programmes and this must include all the stakeholders, rural communities, and the traditional and local authorities concerned.

Given the potential of this sector, we call for the consideration of increased funding in order to ensure the realisation of the department's mandate.

In conclusion, hon Chairperson, we need to ensure that there is continued skills development of our people in the oceans economic sector, and that there is improved research output, which will help realise and stimulate the sector's value-chain industries and focus more on previously disadvantaged communities.

We support Budget Vote 27 and we call for increased funding for the sector, given the importance of the environment and the future wellbeing of South Africa and the potential of job creation by this sector. I am looking forward to us creating more employers from

previously disadvantaged communities which also include youth, women and people with disabilities in this sector.

Thank you very much, hon Chairperson. I want to say, in terms of the budget and in terms of the portfolio committee, that we have discussed the issue of the increase in the budget and we have, as the portfolio committee, agreed that we want to lobby the national Minister of Finance to provide more funding for this department to do that.

But I would be surprised if hon members start to debate about that when they even said in the committee that they didn't support what we are saying here in that there should be an increase in the budget of this department. We fully support that the budget be increased. Also, members should participate in the committee so that they learn more about our discussions. Thank you. [Applause.]

Ms S G N MBATHA: Chairperson, hon Minister, hon Deputy Minister, hon Members of Parliament and fellow citizens, I greet you all. Let me just give a background on what the current situation in South Africa is, which leads us to say that we need the budget of the Department of Environmental Affairs increased.

Maybe some of you are not aware that South Africa is currently facing challenges in waste management. And let me correct this, hon

member from DA: It is not 10% that is going to the disposal site. [Interjections.]

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms V S Siwela): Hon members, order!

Ms S G N MBATHA: Let’s look at the study. In 2017, it was estimated that South Africa generated 42 million tons of waste. About 4,9 million tons of that waste was recycled during that period, which is about 11%. Again, when it comes to our fellow Africans, who are the informal waste pickers, the department has about 60 000 to 90 000 informal waste pickers working with waste either at the landfill site or collecting from the household, which is a lot of work for the department.

We need to acknowledge and accept that waste is a resource and can contribute to the economy of this country and increase the employment rate. When you look at our legality in South Africa, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa is the supreme law and section 24 must be adhered to whether you like it or not where communities have the right to a clean and healthy environment. So, those communities are mostly our black brothers and sisters in the townships and in informal settlements but not in suburbs.

In law there is the National Environmental Management Act, Act 107 of 1998, the National Environmental Management: Waste Act, Act 59 of 2008, and the amended National Environmental Management: Waste

Amendment Act, Act 26 of 2014. The amended Act was amended as a result of some of the issues which were not covered in the first Act, for example e-waste management which is still a crisis in South Africa.

There is the National Waste Management Strategy, the Occupational Health and Safety Act, Act 85 of 1993, and the waste management hierarchy which is not yet up to standard. Why? Because it is not the Department of Environmental Affairs' duty, but the duty of everyone in South Africa. It is the responsibility of all of us here that we separate our waste at source.

The department has draft guidelines on waste separation at source and we have other good pieces of legislation related to chemicals and waste management that must be adhered to in order for us to have a clean country. Let me say, again, that we have good legislation, but the department needs to monitor implementation, hence they need more human resources. Where we need to review these policies, it can be done, and we need to benchmark with other countries.

Let me say that we need to do separation at source correctly. It is not the role of the Department of Environmental Affairs, but the responsibility of all of us as South Africans. This bottle is being recycled by polyethylene terephthalate, Pet. So, it is not going to a landfill site. Let me correct this: it is being recycled by Pet.

So it is part of the separation-at-source process. [Interjections.] Waste separation is the key to improving recovery ...

Mr P M P MODISE: On a point of order, Chairperson?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): What is the point of order, hon member?

Mr P M P MODISE: Hon Winkler was not disrupted in her maiden speech. [Interjections.] This is her maiden speech, but she is being disrupted and is being disrupted by her. [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Order, hon members! Hon members, calm down. Let us give an opportunity for the member who is making a maiden speech to be heard. Unless she is being provocative or controversial, you are not supposed to interrupt a member who is making a maiden speech. Continue, hon member.

Ms S G N MBATHA: Thank you. I am saying that waste separation at source is the key to improving recovery and landfill diversion of waste. This is what we need in South Africa, and the department is trying its level best to do that. Remember the department is there, but we still have the municipalities that must conduct the separation at source for household waste collection.

The greatest value is derived from recycling materials that are well sorted and uncontaminated. Waste must be separated where it is generated. Let’s separate waste. Don’t contaminate. Every citizen must separate the waste they generate at source at all times. Separated waste must be collected per category instead of being mixed in a compactor truck, and flatbed trucks must be encouraged. The Western Cape is still using compactors.

Tonnages of waste must be reported to the SA Waste Information System, Sawis. This will assist the Department of Environmental Affairs to monitor the waste generated, reused and recycled and recovered and have data for research studies and improvement. This leads to the urgent need for industries to develop their industrial waste management plans and for municipalities to develop their waste management plans as part of extended producer responsibility, EPR. [Time expired.] [Applause.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): The next speaker is the hon Hendricks.

Mr M G E HENDRICKS: Thank you, hon Chairperson. Hon Minister, congratulations on your appointment. We need new blood in this department. I want to acknowledge the passion of Prof Lesley Green of the University of Cape Town; Prof Leslie Petrik of the University of the Western Cape; Dumza Nhlapo, chair of the ANC in Masiphumelele; and activist Rose Isles of Fish Hoek in saving this

part of the planet that has been harmed by sewage and chemical pollution.

Everything former President Mandela called for of not harming the environment has been sadly neglected. The rights of the environment in our Constitution are not seen today. Raw sewage and poorly treated sewage pumped into waterways is a national catastrophe, and pollution is our worst nightmare.

Sewage containing chemicals poisoning our waterways, rivers and shorelines is worse than climate change. For two years, I have been an environmental activist as a councillor in the City of Cape Town and you will soon see a damning report on the harm to the environment. Three months of investigative journalism is going to hit Cape Town. This harm has been covered by every newspaper, radio station and television station over the last two years with no action by your department, Minister.

Hon Minister, Al Jama-ah focuses on the harm done in Masiphumelele near the Simon’s Town Naval Base and Zandvlei near Khayelitsha. Your department is seen as a lame duck, as the Green Scorpions have not had one conviction in terms of the National Environmental Management Act. The reason is that you neglect your mandate because you delegate enforcement to the provincial director of Environmental Law Enforcement, whose directives are trumped by an appeal process by an

MEC for the environment who protects their political party mayors, especially in the Western Cape.

Al Jama-ah has learnt of a horrific finding by the Human Rights Commission involving three directors of the Directorate of Environmental Law Enforcement and a settlement agreement between the Public Protector and the City of Cape Town. Two years down the line, environmental harm still exists.

Minister, you must help us get a conviction so that we can jail errant officials in terms of the National Environmental Management Act. Hon Minister, with the deepest respect, the budget doesn't capacitate you to arrest errant officials of municipalities, charge them and get them convicted so that they will stop harming the environment, human beings, livestock, horses and marine life.

When your directors of Environmental Law Enforcement directives are challenged by well-resourced municipalities, they back off because you don't provide funds for them to defend the directives in the High Court. You mustn't delegate enforcement to provinces; rather do it yourself.

Hon Minister, we want to bring to your attention that there was a R10 million research project done by the University of the Western Cape on snoek near Kalk Bay. It found that 40% of the snoek is diseased and poisoned. Our marine life is destroyed because

municipalities pump raw sewage and poorly treated sewage into the waterways, and your department has done nothing about it. Shame on you. We hope you will turn things around. Thank you very much.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): The next speaker is the hon Weber. It is the member's maiden speech.

Ms A M M WEBER: Minister, we, as the residents of the Highveld area in Mpumalanga, are very angry, frustrated, disillusioned and very unhealthy.

Our constitutional rights are being violated. The Constitution states that: "Everyone has the right to an environment that is not harmful to their health or wellbeing." However, people living in the Highveld area of Mpumalanga are surrounded by 12 polluting coal-fired power plants owned by Eskom.

Last year, Greenpeace announced that Mpumalanga is the global number one hotspot for nitrogen dioxide emissions due to these plants. In 2007, this area was declared the Highveld Priority Area as it was identified as one of the hotspots of poor air quality. Five years later, the then Environmental Affairs Minister published an air quality management plan.

In 2019, another seven years later, very little has been done to change the deadly air quality of the Highveld as people are

suffering and dying. After a full 12 years of delivering nothing meaningful, the government has failed to improve the deadly levels of air pollution and, as a result, the Highveld suffers from the most dangerous air pollution in South Africa.

We are angry and rightfully frustrated by promises and plans made with no implementation, no execution and no enforcement of these plans. The violators and polluters have faced zero consequences for blatantly disregarding the environmental laws of their own companies. We are disappointed and angry with government for not enforcing and ensuring that these companies are kept accountable to the basic standards of compliance.

It is 12 years now, Minister. When will that review of the air quality plans that you talked about earlier be completed? Tumelo, a 14-year-old, misses school regularly due to ill health and struggling to breathe. What if she was your daughter? Lifa Pelican uses an inhaler a couple of times a day. What if he was your son? His respiratory problems started when he moved to eMalahleni, but when he moved away with his family he had no problems.

The tragedy is that residents are stuck in this toxic area because this is where they can find employment, but at what cost? It is important to consider the impact of health on unemployment. Workers that are consistently sick are absent from work and eventually lose their jobs.

Minister, do you know what happens when you go to the doctor? The doctor tells you to leave town. Why do the residents have to choose between an income and their health, between immediate survival from a job versus their health and long-term survival?

Government should be ashamed of themselves. What is the use of spending resources on reporting air quality and monitoring if there is no accountability in enforcement and in the prosecution of the big polluters? Minister, your responsibility is to ensure that our air is clean and that the lives of our people are healthy and safe. Thank you very much.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): The next speaker is the hon Modise. It is also his maiden speech.

Mr P M P MODISE: House Chair, special greetings and congratulations to the new Minister and the Deputy Minister. We greet all Members of Parliament and we greet our guests and fellow South Africans. From the outset we wish to express our greatest gratitude to the ANC and the majority of South Africans whose loyalty to the ANC is unquestionable and was demonstrated in the recent elections.

South Africa having a healthy environment is key to a better life and future for all. The ANC has, over the years, reiterated its policy position that the goal is to help all South Africans have a safe and healthy environment. When the ANC speaks of the

environment, it includes the air, land, sea and rivers and also includes plants, animals and our natural resources. This does not exclude the gold that we mine in Carletonville where I come from.

The department's environmental innovations and management solutions are premised on a people-centric approach that recognises the centrality of Batho Pele. We cannot overemphasise the importance of a clean and healthy environment in the eradication of poverty and diseases. These twin challenges have the potential of undermining the important work of our democratic government.

It is, however, important that we acknowledge that our environment is one and that the world was not created in piecemeal. In this regard, we are forever mindful of the collective responsibility of all of us as South Africans, as Africans and as global citizens. We further note that the utilisation of our environment must be done in such a way that it does not short-change future generations and economically exploit the most valuable natural resources, and the utilisation must not harm the environment. The latter is an acknowledgement and a consideration that climate-change mitigation and air and water pollution reduction are not only limited to our country but also find African and global expression.

In the past 25 years, we have made great strides in ensuring that we protect the environment for the benefit of our present communities and ensure that we live in a clean and healthy environment. This,

however, has not been the case for the majority of our poor and rural communities who suffer from the degradation of the environment. A threat to the environment is a threat to human life and existence. The management, protection and promotion of a healthy environment have become the priorities of our time, just like economic freedom.

The world has changed a lot since the end of the Second World War and so too has our environment. In this regard, we wish to remind the House and all South Africans, from all walks of life, about the Hiroshima bombing and its destructive effect. Because of its exposure to human life and the environment, the effects still haunt the world today.

We stand here today to affirm vociferously and welcome the progress made by the Department of Environmental Affairs on a number of progressive policies and its adopted programmes. Some of the programmes speak directly to the empowerment of our people, those of whom would still refuse to be represented by the fellows on my left. This was recently seen in the elections.

We express our confidence in programmes of the Department of Environmental Affairs, now reconfigured together with Forestry and Fisheries. These include but are not limited to chemical waste management, environmental programmes, biodiversity and conservation,

climate change, air quality, sustainable development and oceans and coasts.

The National Development Plan, NDP, explicitly acknowledges that the transition to an environmentally sustainable future, which is carbon constrained, would require the decoupling of economic growth from natural resource degradation and depletion. We reaffirm our unwavering support for these departmental programmes as they have great potential to create jobs. Policy realignment will also help us exploit the benefits associated with the value chain that is related to these industries. These initiatives can empower participants with much-needed skills and create employment opportunities, whilst, at the same time, ensuring the management of natural resources and facilitating the green initiative projects in our most vulnerable communities.

Let me quickly get down to the business of the day ... [Interjections.] ... something that some hon members refuse to comprehend. Allow me to reflect quickly on a number of work opportunities created by the department in the 2016-17 financial year: 98 566 jobs were created of which 54,46% were women, 6,31% were the youth and 5,22% were people living with disabilities. [Applause.] I want someone to rise and argue that this sector does not demonstrate the potential to create jobs.

It would be oblivious and devoid of reality and the prevailing socioeconomic conditions affecting our people if we didn't acknowledge that this environment we are debating today was used to separate our people along racial lines and ethnic groups.

The brutal apartheid regime created sections and divided our people into Xhosas, Sothos and Batswanas. Now, our people reside in dolomitic areas in Khutsong as we speak. Our people reside in Alexandra, in Mdantsane, in Langa and in Botshabelo. They and their forefathers chose Rondebosch; they chose Camps Bay; they chose Sandton. The apartheid regime subjected us to servitude and poverty. They allocated us this space where there is nothing except sand and stones. Our people live in inhuman conditions and in an environment which they can't even plough to grow vegetables or trees. In summary, our people live in squalor and in the Third World. [Interjections.]

Hon Minister, youth unemployment is no longer a theoretical matter in the country. [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon members, order!

Mr P M P MODISE: It needs an undivided and intensive programme of action. The Youth Environmental Service programme, the Yes programme, must respond directly to the plight of young people. Now, having met this yardstick in the 2017-18 financial year, it was just

an attempt to resolve the problems of our people, and we argue that more needs to be done. A clean and healthy environment has great potential for contributing and boosting the tourism industry in our country. It has been reported that in 2017, tourism contributed R136,1 billion to our GDP, and that is about 2,9% of the total GDP when factoring in the value chain in this sector. It is about R412,5 billion or 8,9% of the total GDP. So, the cleanliness of the environment cannot be overemphasised.

But one of the most critical acts of the national democratic revolution is the creation of a legitimate state which derives its authority from the will of the people. The Freedom Charter asserts that "... no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people". Now, the majority of the people have bestowed this revolutionary responsibility on the ANC and we will discharge it. If the people had confidence in others, they would have voted for them. The people have voted for the ANC. We dare not fail them. As Moses Kotane once remarked – and I am sure this might sound very ... [Inaudible.] ... like Greek to others – "Revolution ke Batho".

We are not here because we woke up and became Members of Parliament. We came here because we were elected by the people to represent their views and their aspirations. [Applause.] If you knew who Harry Gwala was – it is clear that you did not – he would have told you that you must defy and account later, and this is exactly what you

are failing to do. Gone are the days when one industry is dominated by a particular race over the others. Environmental affairs, forestry and fisheries are no exception. The time for all of our people to participate in the economic mainstream is now. We are the servants ...

Asidlali! Sithunyiwe la. [Ihlombe.] (*Translation of isiZulu sentence follows.)*

[We are not playing games! We have been sent here. [Applause.]]

People come here and blame air pollution on the department, when air pollution is actually white dominated, because that is an industry that is dominated by white people. You cannot blame that on this department. This is an industry which is white-dominated. You argue, you smile, you laugh or otherwise; it does not matter. [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Order, hon members! Order!

Mr P M P MODISE: Now, the time to score cheap points through well-co-ordinated anarchy has come to an end. The time for ... [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon member, will you just hold it. Hon member, don’t shout at me, okay. Don’t shout at me. If you do it again I going to ask you to leave the House.

Continue, hon member.

Mr P M P MODISE: I maintain that the time to score cheap political points through unco-ordinated anarchy, empty rhetoric and mindless radicalism is over. We want research; we want analysis here. The time for common sense is over. Without any fear or favour of contradiction, the ANC supports Budget Vote 27 of the Department of Environmental Affairs. [Applause.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Thank you, hon member. Your time has expired.

Mr P M P MODISE: Oh, the time is ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Yes, your time has expired.

Mr P M P MODISE: Eleven minutes?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Yes.

The MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES: Hon members ... [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Order, hon members! Order! The day will come, hon member, when you will debate and then you will get the same. Continue, hon member.

The MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES: Thank you very much. I would like to thank everybody for their participation in this debate this evening. I think that what gives me hope and strength, in facing the numerous challenges that exist and that we must confront in this portfolio over the next five years, hon Deputy Minister, is the fact that what we can see in this evening's debate that there is more that unites us in this House, in terms of our approach to policy, than what divides us.

We all agree that sustainable development must balance the way in which we approach our economic development. We all agree that there must be a promotion of renewal energy sources and, I think, hon Holomisa, it is important to say that a green energy fund has already been established under the auspices of the Development Bank of Southern Africa, the DBSA. This fund receives private-sector funding. It also receives international donor funding. It is available for investment in all forms of projects that will promote and develop alternative energy, different forms of waste management and other environmentally sustainable projects.

We all agree on the importance of urgently addressing climate change, biodiversity and environmental degradation, and we agree

that the Department of Environmental Affairs must be the custodian of environmental issues and must take effective regulatory action against transgression when it is necessary. And, by the way, hon members, it is not true that there has been no conviction for environmental offences. In the 2017-18 financial year alone, there were 53 convictions for environmental transgressions.

We agree that the department must be proactive in relation to its sister departments and that is why, when addressing the problems of the Highveld Priority Area with regard to air quality control, I have already approached the Department of Minerals and Energy and also the Department of Public Enterprises. We do intend, hon Weber, to complete the review of this plan this year and we do intend this year to engage with industry and get a better quality of air in the Highveld region.

We agree that we must increase, strategically, our protected areas and this would include our water sources, our wetlands, our marine-protected areas. We do hope, in this five-year term, to open two new national parks. We agree that there has to be better policing and law enforcement to control poaching and wildlife trafficking. And, by the way, hon members, canned lion hunting is outlawed in this country. It is outlawed in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, Nema, and is also outlawed by the threatened and protected species regulations.

We agree, hon member Paulsen, that we have to settle land claims relating to protected areas either through compensation, joint-use partnerships or the allocation of alternative land. We also agree that, unless local communities who live in the areas surrounding our national parks are integrated into sustainable use value chains, we cannot expect them to have an interest in protecting those parks or desisting from activities which might otherwise be defined as poaching.

I want, hon members, to challenge Parliament – and, in due course, every government department – to outlaw the use of plastic bottles for water. I see no reason why we cannot have glass jugs in this Chamber, and I hope that you will support me in this campaign on both sides of the House. [Applause.]

We agree that there must be proper governance and proper auditing, and I have set a target that there must be an unqualified audit within a year in this department. I have given them two years to get a clean audit. That applies to the department and to the entities. I have also – at our strategic planning meeting on Monday – insisted that this department and all our entities introduce the open tender programme so that all our procurement is transparent and open to public scrutiny. [Applause.]

Let me conclude with where I began. If we have such a high level of agreement on what the priorities are that are facing our government

and the long-term future of humankind, then we have to agree that it cannot just be the role of one department or one sphere of government to deal with these matters, and that it is incumbent on all of us to mobilise all spheres of government, all the citizens and all of civil society in support of these objectives. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

Debate concluded.

The mini-plenary session rose at 20:57.