



agriculture,
forestry & fisheries

Department:
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

23 April 2019

**MR SENZENI ZOKWANA, HONOURABLE MINISTER:
AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES**

**OPENING REMARKS: FRAP2020 LAUNCH, LORD CHARLES
HOTEL, SOMERSET WEST, WESTERN CAPE**

Programme Directors;

Captains and CEOs of the Fishing Industry;

CEOs and representatives of the DAFF Entities;

Fishing Industry Association Representatives in attendance;

Civil Society and NGOs Representatives;

Director General of DAFF;

Deputy Director General: Fisheries Management;

Various government Departments;

Department Officials;

Ladies and Gentleman,

I am glad for the opportunity to spend a couple of minutes talking on an important sector of our Department and of South Africa's economy. The fishing Industry warrants a collective responsibility and focus given its strategic potential to unlock the needed economic growth in the country. The collaboration by all critical stakeholders is of paramount importance and needs to take priority- it gives me pleasure to see the diverse representation in this room today and it is my hope that these talks can give rise to a fruitful discussion with clear actions.

Let me begin with a reflection on the Constitution of our beloved Country in particular Section 24(b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (“the Constitution”) which guarantees everyone a right *“to have the environment protected, for the benefit of present and future generations, through reasonable legislative and other measures that-*

- (i) prevent pollution and ecological degradation;*
- (ii) promote conservation; and*
- (iii) secure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development.*

It is my considered view that the Marine Living Resources Act, 1998 (Act No. 18 of 1998) (“the MLRA”) is that reasonable legislation which came into existence to give effect to Section 24(b) of the Constitution. This is evident from the long title of the MLRA which includes: *‘the conservation of the marine ecosystem . . . the long-term sustainable utilisation of marine living resources . . . and the exercise of control over marine living resources in a fair and equitable manner to the benefit of all the citizens of South Africa ...’*

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is therefore my Constitutional obligation as the Minister to ensure that the allocation of fishing rights in South Africa is done in a fair and equitable manner to the benefit of all citizens of South Africa and future generations. As the Executive Functionary of allocation of fishing rights in South Africa, I have in terms of section 79 of the MLRA delegated this power to the Deputy Director-General: Fisheries Management for the 2020 Fishing Rights Allocation Process as I have no doubt that she will continue to decisively endeavor to achieve the objectives and principles of inclusive participation in the fishing industry as she has done so during the past allocations of 2015/16 Fishing Rights Allocation Process. As the Minister, I will still retain my power as the Appellate Authority in terms of section 80 of the MLRA.

The Fisheries sector in South Africa, despite various efforts and interventions to promote it, remain fairly unknown and undervalued. It is a sad reality given the country's endowment with the Indian Oceans on the East, the Atlantic Ocean on the west and Southern Oceans on the South.

I am talking about no less than 22 Fisheries that are being harvested, commercially, recreationally and will soon be part of the basket of species in the small Scale Fisheries sector that is currently implemented since last year in all four coastal provinces.

The tuna fishery in itself has over the years of South Africa's full membership to the Regional Fisheries Management Organisations increased allocations tremendously- however, its full potential is yet to be realized. There is a number of potential candidate species in the pipeline, like the Octopus and other by-catch species as an example.

South Africa as a developing nation needs to intensively engage with every aspect of economic growth opportunity to achieve prosperity. The Oceans economy and more specifically, fisheries and aquaculture present such opportunity. Transformation, diversification and inclusiveness in the business of fisheries cannot be overemphasized in this space and time. It is a necessary condition for which big established commercial companies within the industry must not only embrace but lead it- the Patrice Motsepe example in the mining sector, is just an example!

Exclusiveness will lead to narrow growth and will increase insecurity to those already benefitting, while the excluded may end up not folding their arms whilst eating crumbs. And so, for industry peace and stability, inclusiveness and handholding approach to those who were previously disadvantaged is a necessary condition.

Substantive transformation in the Fishing Industry still remains a challenge and it needs all of us to work together to achieve such needed transformation in this sector. It is therefore high time the Department really consider to Cluster our fishery sectors in such that those fishery nearshore resources are reserved to benefit the Small-Scale Fishing Sector as well as Small Medium Size Enterprises. I therefore urge that each and every one of industry players come into party to ensure that the transformation agenda in the fishing sector is realized during the 2020 Fishing Rights Allocation Process.

Ladies and Gentlemen, when we talk transformation in the Fishing Industry we need to be honest in our discussions in order for Government to adequately deliver and achieve on this imperative. I therefore invite all those that have resources at their disposal to

come forward with workable suggestions on how we can achieve substantive transformation in the sector without collapsing and jeopardizing businesses and investments already made in the sector.

The participation by coastal communities cannot be ignored any further 25 years down the line in our democracy. These communities cannot and should not be reduced into labour only. They have experience and many of them are fourth, fifth and sixth generation of fishing families and have learnt the art of fishing from their preceding family generations. These communities must be assisted by both government and industry to ensure the success of the small scale fisheries policy implementation. It is for this reason we have began with speed the building of Small Scale Fisheries sector through Coastal community's cooperatives. We have trained them on business management and we seek industry buy-in through availing continuous mentorship and capital investments so that they grow. Small Scale Fisheries will play a critical role in addressing food security and unemployment. So it is at the best interest of the industry to embrace it and extend a helping hand to them.

As mentioned before, our Department has pioneered the development of an Application (App), called ABALOBI which is a tool that assists the small fishers to access markets thereby cutting a middleman. The App has changed how these fishers do business and maximum return on their daily catch via the market place- selling directly. I urge you to download this ABALOBI App, which is already used by a number of retailers and about 120 restaurants in Cape Town.

I still remain committed in reviving the Fisheries Transformation Council which will be the arm of Government to facilitate the achievement of fair and equitable access to allocation of fishing rights to persons from historically disadvantaged sectors and to small medium size enterprises.

Another key aspect that needs closer look and urgent intervention is the safety of fishermen and fisherwomen at sea. In the past, we have seen incidents that claimed lives of crew whilst at sea. In this regard, the Department shall tightened its policy on the allocation of fishing rights to ensure that never again lives of our crew will be claimed whilst conducting fishing operations.

I want to take this opportunity to applaud the companies that have prioritized partnering with the Department in its attempt to take along youth in our country that have obtained post-school qualifications into their respective companies as Interns, at their own costs, thereby giving them necessary exposure, confidence and experience which enables them to stand better chances to find employment. I have special words of gratitude to those companies who went further and employ on a permanent basis these graduates. Some of these graduates are here with us as part of senior management of these companies in our important fisheries sector!

As the Department, through Fisheries, we have made a lot of strides for the sector. As a country we are no more a spectator in the various international and regional bodies. We have affiliated to and playing a crucial role into Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs). These are bodies such as International Commission for Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT); the Commission for conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT); and the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), including Antarctic Treaty, the commission for the conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (the CCAMLR).

These are important bodies in influencing not only the discourse on fishing economy internationally but to assert ourselves in the interest of the country and the industry. In the World of Tuna SA has emerged as a role model to follow because of our role in this regard.

Earlier this year in January, we have signed a memorandum of understanding with Namibia which focuses on a number of bilateral cooperation as two countries shares the Atlantic Ocean borders and migratory fishing species. We share the most productive Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem (BCLME). We will be working together in areas of research and development; Aquaculture and inland Fisheries; Monitoring Control and Surveillance; Capacity Building and Development; and Cooperation on Economic Development of Fisheries and Blue Economy. This framework provides opportunities for the industry and our neighbors.

We are also moving with speed in introducing and implementing aquaculture. We are implementing Aquaculture Development Zones (ADZ) as part of enabling the environment for its rollout. These special zones are earmarked for aquaculture value chain

activities with relevant authorizations in place and relevant infrastructure put in place. Aquaculture is expected to create massive jobs across the country with youth being the most beneficiaries.

I call upon the industry bodies and stakeholders to engage the Department in a meaningful, critical- yet constructive manner as we seek to begin the public consultation on the draft policy of rights allocation which will be presented tomorrow. It stands to reason that from time to time, change on how rights are allocated will have to be effected in order to meet government objectives, and how this is achieved needs a dialogue and consultation that is honest and transparent.

I take this opportunity to wish you fruitful engagements and looking forward to the outcomes of this important assembly

Make South Africa, my country, your country and our country proud.

Thank you, Enkosi.

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