



environmental affairs

Department:
Environmental Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

TO : **Stenette Grosskopf**

FROM : Carte Blanche

E-MAIL : [REDACTED]

TEL : [REDACTED]

TIME-FRAME : **LATER THIS WEEK**

RE : **REQUEST FOR INTERVIEW: CARTE BLANCHE: FISHERIES**

Good day Mr Modise,

I am a journalist with Carte Blanche and I'm working on a story about illegal gill net fishing in our dams and rivers. I was hoping someone from the Department would be willing to speak to us on camera about the issue. It seems to be a huge problem as people are reporting hundreds of metres of gill nets in our rivers and dams. We would like some clarity on the legislation around this issue as well as new legislation around traditional fishing that is apparently in the pipeline. And we would obviously want to know what is being done about this issue.

Please let me know if someone would be available to speak to us sometime next week.

RESPONSE TO CARTE BLANCHE

The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (herein referred to as "the Department") wishes to respond to the questions raised by the Insert Producer of Carte Blanch, Mr Stenette Grosskopf.

The freshwater (inland) wild capture fisheries sector (herein referred to as "the sector") has a potential to contribute towards food security, employment and economic growth. However, the absence of a national policy to guide the sustainable utilization and development of freshwater fisheries has constrained the development of the sector.

Currently the sector is regulated through the National Environmental Management Act No. 107 of 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) as well as the Specific Environmental Management Acts (SEMA's) and by the provincial departments responsible for biodiversity conservation in a varying manner through provincial Acts, Regulations and Ordinances.

Much like in the rest of the world, Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing is a problem in South Africa. The consumption-linked small-scale fisheries subsector that contributes to the people's livelihoods is not recognised with clear resource access rights. This policy imbalance contributes to the current IUU situation and its associated consequences. The pieces of legislation referred to make emphasis mostly to the administration of the recreational fishing subsector.

The Department's stance in this regard is that the type of fishing gear used should be sustainable, guided by scientific research and should be in line with the socio-economic prospects of the utilization of natural resources in order to improve the livelihoods of the resource users. Furthermore, the fishers are expected to adhere to the law and therefore, transgressions are discouraged.

The Department has embarked on the development of the National Freshwater (Inland) Wild Capture Fisheries Policy (herein referred to as "the policy") as the first step towards the sustainable growth of the sector.

The Department is currently undertaking the public consultations on the second draft of the policy throughout the country. The public consultative process will conclude on 08 August 2019. The draft policy may be accessed on the Departmental website by following the link: <https://www.daff.gov.za/daffweb3/Branches/Fisheries-Management/Aquaculture-and-Economic-Development/Public-Notices-and-News>.

Purpose of the policy

The policy seeks to align inland fishery governance with constitutional requirements for a sustainable development approach to natural resource utilization for the benefit of all citizens. This includes legislative reform and harmonization, the definition of access rights, criteria for ensuring sustainable harvest levels, government organisational structure and capacity, cooperative governance and co-management arrangements and the empowerment of rural communities to participate equitably in sustainable resource use.

Profile of the Freshwater Fisheries in South Africa

The policy categorises the freshwater wild capture fisheries sector into two subsectors i.e. small-scale and recreational fisheries subsectors.

1. Small-scale Fisheries

Small-scale fisher means a person who fishes or is engaged in small-scale fishing and ancillary activities to meet food and basic livelihood needs. Small-scale fisher predominantly employs traditional low technology or passive fishing gear, usually undertakes single day fishing trips and engages in sale or barter.

2. Recreational Fisheries

Recreational angler is a person who engages in fishing for pleasure or competition and is not dependent on the activity to meet primary income or basic nutritional needs. The catch is not generally sold or otherwise traded.

Categories of Resource Use Rights

The draft policy proposes five (5) different categories of resource use rights i.e. a right to undertake small-scale fishing, recreational fishing, recreational fishing charter/guiding, stocking of hatchery reared fish into public waters for fishery purposes or traditional and customary fishing.

The inclusion of traditional and customary fishing right category is to make provision for recognition of the fishers making use of those methods considered as traditional and customary fishing methods and thus recognising their Constitutional rights.

Scope of the Policy

This policy is intended for use within the Republic of South Africa in respect of public freshwater bodies, including rivers, dams, lakes and wetlands. Waters defined as marine environments in terms of the Marine Living Resources Act No. 18 of 1998 (Act No. 18 of 1998) as amended, which includes estuaries, are excluded from this policy.

Policy Guiding Principles

1. **Inclusivity-** all South African citizens have the right to fish on freshwaters subject to the applicable access rights, permits and prescribed regulations.
2. **Equitable Access-** through interventions that empower historically disadvantaged groups to access freshwater aquatic resources.
3. **Transformation-** to provide for processes to achieve previously disadvantaged representation in the sector.
4. **Sustainable Development-** the Constitutional principle of 'sustainable development' to guide sector governance.
5. **Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries-** to ensure balance between ecological and socio-economic benefits.
6. **Precautionary Approach-** to limit fishing effort where information about the resource status and productivity is insufficient.
7. **Value Chain Approach-** in order to maximize the socio-economic benefits.
8. **Developmental Approach-** to maximize the potential economic and social benefits.
9. **Good Governance-** based on consultation, co-management, transparency, accountability, effectiveness, efficiency and responsiveness.

Regards

ALBI MODISE

CHIEF DIRECTOR: COMMUNICATIONS

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS