



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MINISTRY OF WATER AND
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

2010 -09- 14

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Reference: 6/2/2/6

MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: QUESTION 2314 FOR WRITTEN REPLY

A draft reply to the above-mentioned question asked by Mr P F Smith (IFP); is attached for your consideration.

Angel
DIRECTOR-GENERAL (Acting)

DATE: *13/9/10*

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DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED

B P Sonjica
MS B P SONJICA, MP
MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

DATE: *2010 - 09 - 15*

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 2314

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 30 AUGUST 2010
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 25)

2314. Mr P F Smith (IFP) to ask the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs:

- (1) Whether the acting director of Water Affairs in the North West province (name furnished) described the water of the Hartebeespoort Dam as pristine last year; if so,
- (2) whether her department is in agreement with this assertion; if not, (a) what has her department done to correct the assertion and (b) what (i) has her department done and (ii) is her department doing to restore the dam to health;
- (3) whether her department is keeping all persons in contact with the dam's water fully appraised of any potential dangers to their health that may arise from their consumption or use of (a) the water or (b) its fish; if not, why not, in each case; if so, (i) how (aa) extensive and (bb) effective is the campaign and (ii) what are the further relevant details?

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REPLY:

- (1) No, Mr Petrus Venter did not describe the water from the Hartbeespoort Dam last year as pristine. However in the media Release of the 23 September 2009, my Department stated that "the dam is currently in a visually pristine condition" and that "the monitoring team has reported water clarity of up to a depth of 5m below the water surface in certain areas".
- (2) Yes, my Department is in agreement with the assertion made during the media release indicated in paragraph (1) above.
 - (2)(a) Falls away.
 - (2)(b)(i) My Department has (with the assistance of Rand Water as the Implementing Agent) fast tracked the Hartebeespoort Dam Integrated Biological Remediation Programme which includes the dam basin and integrated catchment management programmes.
 - (2)(b)(ii) My Department continues to implement the Hartebeespoort Dam Integrated Biological Remediation Programme as well as ensuring that the water resource is protected, conserved and managed in accordance with requirements of the National Water Act, 1998 (Act No 36 of 1998).
- (3)(a) Yes, as part of an overall awareness campaign, my Department does inform the public on the use of water from the dam and the dangers of consuming untreated water.
- (3)(b) No, there is no information to confirm any potential danger to health that may arise from the consumption or use of fish in the dam.

- (3)(i)(aa) The campaign conducted includes presentations; exhibitions; demonstration of some of the awareness activities during the Water Institute of Southern Africa Conference hosted on 19 - 22 April 2010. In addition, information pamphlets; booklets and posters were distributed to the public and others were presented at the Pretoria Show hosted on 27 August - 5 September 2010. It should be noted that the information is also accessible from my Department's website (www.dwaf.gov.za/harties) under the Harties Metsi a me programme and is always updated with latest information. Furthermore, the Media liaison is continuously taking place with media releases made particularly during period when water quality that can be detrimental to the health of public.
- (3)(i)(bb) There is no information to substantiate the effectiveness of our campaigns.
- (3)(b)(ii) Fish Health Assessments were conducted as part of the Fish Survey prior to the commencement of the Remediation programme. The assessment revealed that there are no risks related to microcystin in the fish tissue. It was also found that the fish fillets of carp, catfish and the Mozambique tilapia complied with the minimum microbiological requirements for South African Food Standards. The general acceptable principle is that proper gutting and cleaning of fish prior to cooking still remains the most important measure to eliminate any contamination of any fish tissue.

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