



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MINISTRY OF WATER AND
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

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MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: QUESTION 3505 FOR WRITTEN REPLY

A draft reply to the above question by Mr X Mabasa (ANC) is attached for your consideration.

ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL

DATE: 2/11/2011

DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED ✓

MRS B E E MOLEWA, MP
MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

DATE: 2011/11/22

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO. 3505

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 11 NOVEMBER 2011
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 38)

3505. Mr X Mabasa (ANC) to ask the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs:

Whether there are any programmes in place to (a) ensure that the rivers which run through South Africa and neighboring countries are kept perennially neat and (b) preserve the sponge source of such rivers; if not, why not, in each case; if so, what are the relevant details in each case?

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REPLY:

- (a) Yes, there is a programme in place to ensure that the rivers which run through South Africa and neighboring countries are kept perennially neat. The ecological health of rivers is monitored through the National Aquatic Ecosystem Health Monitoring Programme, better known as the River Health Programme. Through this programme, the State of the River report is generated, with specific management recommendations for implementation within the relevant catchments.
- (b) Chapter 3 of the National Water Act, 36 of 1998 (NWA), sets out measures that need to be undertaken to ensure the protection of water resources within the context of sustainable use. The Department is in the process of classifying water resources in the Vaal, Olifants (which is part of the Limpopo river system), Olifants-Doorn and Crocodile (West) Marico Water Management Areas (WMA). The determination of classes in these WMAs and the setting of the corresponding Resource Quality Objectives will ensure that the required level of protection for these water resources is determined to facilitate a balance between protection and use of water resources in these WMAs.

In addition, the recommended ecological condition for many of the major river systems have been determined at different levels of confidence to define the required water quality, quantity and habitat specifications for these water resources as an indication of optimal functioning of ecosystems to support ecological goods, services and attributes of water resources. These specifications are incorporated into water use licenses as a proactive measure to prevent further degradation of water resources such as rivers, wetlands and groundwater.

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