



forestry, fisheries & the environment

Department:
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

(For written reply)

QUESTION NO. 1029 {NW1138E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 11 of 2023

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Mr N Singh (IFP) to ask the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:

(1) In light of the fact that her department is one of the co-ordinators of the project to remove 120 wild cheetahs from the Republic over a 10-year period and export them to the Republic of India, and considering that cheetahs have vanished from 90% of their historical range in Africa and entirely from Asia with fewer than 30 Asiatic cheetahs left in the world, (a) on which scientific information that was published within the past 10 years did her department base its decision in this regard and (b) what are the reasons that her department did not open the specified project for public comments before signing the Memorandum of Understanding?

1029. THE MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPLIES:

1. (a) The Department Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment's (DFFE) role in the cheetah translocation project was to facilitate the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between South Africa and India. The DFFE received advice from the Scientific Authority, which establish the parameters of the export of cheetahs from the small private reserves/game farms in South Africa. As per the advice, the small reserves in South Africa can sustain a population offtake of not more than 19 male and 14 adult female cheetah per year.

According to the information obtained from the Scientific Authority, the Non-detriment finding advice was provided as a population viability analysis undertaken as part of a PhD research project in consultation with relevant experts. This analysis indicates that the proposed off-take of cheetah from the managed metapopulation is conservative and will be sustainable for the foreseeable future. Monitoring of the metapopulation will nevertheless continue to ensure that there are no unforeseen negative impacts. It should be noted that the managed metapopulation of cheetah in South Africa comprises almost 500 cheetahs in over 70 private and state-owned reserves and has shown an increasing trend over the period 2004-2022, with the number of cheetahs held in many reserves nearing carrying capacity. South Africa is therefore very well placed to assist other countries in their conservation efforts to restore cheetah to their native landscapes.

Furthermore, the cheetahs that were exported do not form part of the South African wild cheetah population, which is managed by the South African Government through South African National Parks (Kruger National Park, Kgalagadi cheetah populations). These cheetahs come from small private reserves/game farms. In this regard, the MEC of the relevant provincial conservation authority is the issuing authority responsible for deciding on the applications for any permit not listed in subsection (1) of Section 87A of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act No. 10 of 2004).

All available evidence suggests that the export of cheetah to India will not be detrimental to the survival of the species in South Africa, provided not more than 19 male and 14 adult female cheetah are removed from the managed metapopulation per annum.

(b) By law, Bilateral Agreements (including the MoUs) do not require public consultations.



MS B D CREECY, MP
MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

DATE: 4/4/2023