



# agriculture, forestry & fisheries

Department:  
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

**23 October 2017**

**For immediate release**

### **FISHING COMMUNITY DEMANDS MINISTER'S INTERVENTION WITH MIDDLE MEN IN THE FISHING SECTOR**

**Cape Town – Monday, 23 October 2017:** “The middlemen that pose as representatives of our people should be exposed for who and what they are!” said Minister Senzeni Zokwana, as he engaged with fishers on the West Coast who raised concerns that others claim to represent them without any mandate from them.

“I appeal to fishing communities to elect their own local based structures that can represent them honestly so not to allow others to take advantage of vulnerable fishing communities”. This was the strong message from Minister Zokwana at a meeting he held with more than 2000 fishers at the Noordhoek community in Velddrif last week.

Acknowledging that middlemen use their catch to market and sell at huge profits for themselves, the community fully supports the Minister in wanting to deal with their own marketing instead of middlemen who profess to be fishers.

The Small Scale fisheries Policy is geared at strengthening the position of coastal communities to do marketing themselves and be involved in the entire value chain of fishing, which is where the real economic empowerment lies.

Minister Zokwana, also committed to deal with the Foodcorp after numerous complains levelled at this company by community members. “We need to take a decision on what to do with the shares that were taken away, this is a priority.” Minister Zokwana said. In the same way we dealt and are dealing with the Bengis case will we deal with Foodcorp and all the illegal beneficiaries, the Minister stated.

Other issues of transforming the fishing industry relates to bycatch, stock assessors and monopoly in the industry among others. Minister Zokwana indicated the process of establishing the Fisheries Transformation Council has commenced and it is hoped that the monopoly in the industry would be addressed.

Minister Zokwana also mooted the idea of foreign partnerships to assist the local small scale fishers in accessing resources off shore as the capacity to do so is limited and confined to a few companies in South Africa. In addition, he stressed the need for acknowledging and respecting indigenous knowledge and appealed to the department to incorporate this in its assessments of stocks.

In conclusion Minister Zokwana drew attention to Operation Phakisa and the Oceans Economy where possibilities have been identified to extend the fishing industry with the development of aquaculture.

### **Progress on Small-Scale Fisheries**

For the West Coast of the Western Cape, a total of 21 fishing communities participated in the registration and verification process where they will be declared as small-scale scale fishing communities with SSF co-operatives. A total of 1959 people registered and out of this, a total of 520 people were provisionally made successful as small-scale fishers. Those who were made provisionally unsuccessful were given an opportunity to appeal from October to December 2016. A total of 639 people lodged appeals and the department is finalizing these appeals for recommendation to the Minister before the department can announce the final list of small-scale fishers in the West Coast of the Western Cape. Once the announcements are made, the department will hold a two day training and co-operative registration session in

each of the 21 communities and further assist registered co-operatives to apply for 15-year fishing rights.

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