

KWAZULU GOVERNMENT SERVICE

MEMORANDUM TO THE CABINET

FROM DEPARTMENT OF

FILE NO. 4/9/72ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

DATE _____

re: TEMBE ELEPHANT PARK: CLOSURE OF THE INTERNATIONAL BORDER

1. OBJECTIVE:

To obtain Cabinet approval for the Director, Bureau of Natural Resources to meet Frelimos Directorate of Wildlife in Maputaland to discuss conservation problems relating to elephant crossing the international border and Sea Turtle conservation.

2. BACKGROUND:

The Officer in Charge, Tembe Elephant Park recently submitted a report on the plight of elephants crossing the international border to and from Mocambique.

The essence of the report is that it presents a case for the closure of the international border with Mocambique to prevent elephants moving in and out of Tembe into the wartorn zone where Renamo and Frelimo are engaged in a civil war.

Although there are no large scale migrations of elephants and most of those which do cross the border are bulls the fact is that the movements are continual, rising sharply in the wet season.

There is evidence to suggest that the elephants cross from Tembe to get to the Rio Maputo for food and water.

They do not stay long and wander back at their leisure. It seems that the breeding herds remain in Tembe so they are not seriously affected by the problems north of the international border.

The civil war in Mocambique is at the root of the problem in that elephants come back into Tembe with wounds inflicted by Frelimo and Renamo patrols. These attacks on the elephant could either result from so called self defence or for obtaining ivory.

Since Mr Patrick Ngubane, one time secretary of the Tembe Tribal Authority was recently arrested for possession of ivory he allegedly obtained north of the border, trade in ivory cannot be ruled out as a reason for the attacks.

The second problem is that elephants are being snared in Mocambique. Although usually not fatal there is evidence that they are coming back into Tembe with damaged and in some cases amputated trunks.

Tembe Elephant Park is in danger of having an ever increasing reservoir of wounded and potentially dangerous elephants. This causes problems for local people harvesting in the reserve, tourists and resident staff. It is the view of the Bureau's Central Conservation Committee that although closure of the international border to inhibit movement will not adversely affect the elephant population it could pose

difficulties. Obviously the elephants, denied access to their ancient haunts will not simply stop and turn around but seek alternative routes of entry east or west of Tembe. Thus elephant-human collisions could escalate. Also despite Frelimos preoccupation with the civil war they may see arbitrary closure of the border here as an hostile act, even an act of no faith in their conservation efforts since they also have an elephant park east of the Rio Maputo.

3. MOTIVATION:

The Director BNR recently received information that Frelimo Wildlife Directorate would not be averse to coming to Tembe Elephant Park to discuss the problems posed by the trans border elephant migrations. They also indicated that they would like advice on sea turtle conservation currently under the control of a NPB-BNR joint team on the Maputaland coast.

The Director sees this as an ideal opportunity to establish good relations with Mocambique officials. Since the BNRs ultimate goal is to proclaim the entire border area national park such liaison could have far reaching effects.

Such a meeting could be sensitive in the political sense and it is for this reason that the matter is tabled before Cabinet.

With Cabinet approval the Director, BNR would like to

extend an official invitation to Mocambique Wildlife Directorate, via the Director of Kangwanas Nature Conservation Division (who is in contact with them) to visit Maputaland to see the problem area. In conjunction with the Natal Parks Board they would also be shown the turtle conservation on the coast. All contacts could be low key.

4. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS:

The Director and four of his senior and regional staff would be involved in escorting the officials around Maputaland.

It is also suggested that a senior representative of the Department of the Chief Minister be present.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The BNR would provide funds for entertaining the officials. National Airways Corporation would be asked to fly them from Nelspruit to Manguzi.

Transport and accommodation to be provided by the BNR at Ndumo Game Reserve.

6. OTHER DEPARTMENTS/INSTITUTIONS CONSULTED

It would be necessary to inform the Commanding Officer, Natal Command of the visit as the area north of the

Jozini-Ingwavuma - Manguzi tar road is an operational area.

Natal Parks Boards Director should be available for discussions on sea turtles since he is a world authority on these creatures.

A senior representative of the Department of the Chief Minister should accompany the tour.

The Department of Foreign Affairs should be made aware of the visit.

RESOLUTION

Cabinet resolves that

1. An official invitation to Mocambique Wildlife Directorate to visit Maputaland to discuss conservation matters be extended through the office of the Chief Minister.
2. The Bureau of Natural Resources be delegated to conduct a tour of the Maputaland region, providing accommodation food, and transport.
3. The Department of Foreign Affairs and the Officer Commanding, Natal Command be officially informed of the proposed visit of Mocambique officials to KwaZulu.

4. The Director, Natal Parks Board be invited for that part of the tour dealing with sea turtle conservation.

MINISTER OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

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