



**The Honourable Minister Barbara Creecy**

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Dear Honourable Minister Barbara Creecy,

**RE: #TipsForBarbara, Your Budget Policy Speech - 11th of July**

The undersigned organizations are part of the Wildlife Animal Protection Forum South Africa (WAPFSA), an alliance of diverse South African NGOs that share certain values, knowledge and objectives and that collectively comprise a body of expertise from scientific, conservation, legal, welfare, rights, social justice, faith and public advocacy sectors.

We appreciate your #TipsForBarbara initiative and your efforts to engage with the public and NGOs. We see the challenges the environment is facing on a global scale and the opportunity that governments have of achieving the Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets, your mandate is of incommensurable importance. It also comes with tremendous responsibilities, and we congratulate you for accepting this position.

By increasing biodiversity protection under the seas and on land, paying extra attention to the vital importance of forest protection, reducing the usage of fossil fuels, ensuring our wildlife is protected from illegal demands that affect our river, ocean and land animals, banning outright the usage of plastics, reversing the damage the human footprint has caused to our natural resources will, most certainly, assist you in making the right decisions regarding climate change.

We ask that you work in collaboration with the eco-tourism sector, and all other stakeholders in this wonderful country of ours. Eco-tourism employs the largest amount of people, and if you prioritise investment in environmental education, this added value to our natural treasures will be an example for the world to follow, indeed it will be the example for other African nations to follow. South Africans are internationally respected because we are the country that brought the white rhino back from almost extinction, we are at the forefront of many admirable attempts to keep our environment and wildlife intact and secure with the knowledge that we will be

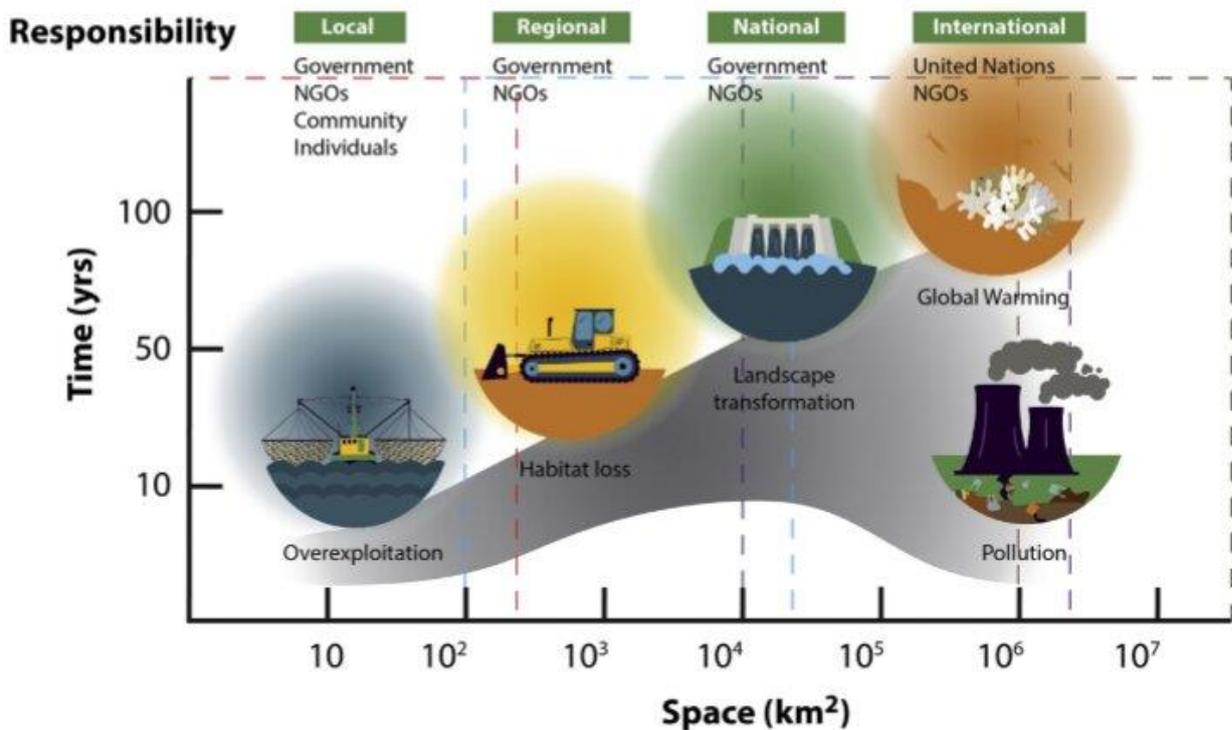
sustainable for many generations to come. However, there is a huge blood red stain in our reputation and that is the captive lion breeding and hunting and lion bone trade, which has also been recently linked to the smuggling of rhino horn via huge criminal syndicates<sup>1</sup>.

We would further, like to add some considerations:

1. General challenges

We face challenges which need a radical shift of mind, for future generations to survive; wildlife and ecosystems play a crucial role in climate resilience as well as disaster prevention and mitigation. In order to protect biodiversity, radical changes to reduce human impacts on nature are essential. Our current "sustainable development" policy is strictly connected to the continuous destruction of our vital resources and natural heritage.

We must not have a narrow-minded approach to the overall goal of saving species and ecosystems. We need to prepare for future threats too. Although climate change is at the forefront as the current international threat to biodiversity, there are many other equally important threats, such as microplastics and nitrogen pollution.



Picture courtesy Cell Press

<sup>1</sup> The Extinction Business, South Africa’s Lion Bone Trade, July 2018

### **Among immediate changes we suggest:**

- a. Ban single use plastic. Single largest threat to our fauna and flora below the seas and on land.
- b. Ban the use of pesticides. Pesticides are killing off insects and all micro fauna, making serious negative impacts on all wildlife food chains and on pollination. Recent studies have shown that pesticides, instead of increasing farm production, are actually reducing it, due to insects disappearing.
- c. Tighten restrictions on the use of chemical disinfectants for industrial and domestic use, incentivise and perhaps consider de-taxing the use of organic, low impact products.
- d. Invest in low-impact green energy and incentivise the public to upgrade industrial and domestic systems. Invest in poor communities so they can access sustainable lighting and heating devices.
- e. Water accessibility is crucial; In order to protect our water resources- oceans, wetlands, rivers and underground water courses, consider the banning of fracking, drastically reduce mining activities and oil and gas exploration and drilling. Equally important is to ensure that raw sewerage with dangerous chemicals is not being allowed into our rivers and marine reserves. It is essential to promote proper industrial and domestic disposal of chemicals and oils.

### **2. Farming:**

- Farming in South Africa has included the farming of wildlife, creating an unethical industry which brings a large amount of money to few individuals and dangerously affects South Africa's international reputation as well as other resources and the ecological sustainability of our national heritage. This specific industry has also been affecting our environment and surrounding communities. For example, just to be able to feed lions and predators in captivity it is required to supply 11 million chickens a year to feed the animals and 22 million tons of maize to feed the chickens. The employment opportunities are low and often linked to the carcass disposal offered as food. Lion meat in the industry can be contaminated with TB and slaughter drugs and this puts at risk the health of very fragile communities. These practices must be outlawed.
- Re-green: Incentivise the planting of air-cleaner trees in harmony with biodiversity and the restoration of indigenous forests.
- Encourage vegetable plantations of all kind versus meat farming, which has a large environmental impact with its pollution and water consumption and is a key contributor to climate change.

## **In Conclusion**

The education of younger generations in environmental responsibilities is vital. These young people are going to inherit the planet we leave. It should not be their responsibility to fix or repair the damage we leave behind but rather their need to inherit a home that we have repaired; our attempts at this need to increase and we are ready to assist you and follow your leadership in this mission.

Thank you,

***Stefania Falcon, Future 4 Wildlife***  
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***Beauty Without Cruelty (South Africa)***  
***Centre for Animal Rehabilitation and Education***  
***Future 4 Wildlife***  
***Global March for Elephants and Rhinos***  
***Global White Lion Trust***  
***Institute for Critical Animal Studies (Africa)***  
***Landmark Foundation***  
***Sea Shepherd***  
***Southern African Fight for Rhinos***  
***Vervet Monkey Foundation***  
***WildAid Southern Africa***

