02 August 2023

Dear Honourable Minister Barbara Creecy,

GRAVE CONCERNS RE LACK OF MEETINGS OF THE WILDLIFE WELL-BEING FORUM (WWBF)

The Honourable Minister launched the WWBF on a live-streamed meeting on the 5th of May 2023, with the promise that there would be meaningful, ongoing consultation between the members of the Wildlife Well-Being Forum and the Department with the recommendation of organised monthly meetings.

A draft work plan was shared within the WWBF for comments in mid-May and a preliminary meeting was held on the 30th of May 2023. The agenda included the election of a Chair and the planning of monthly meetings to be discussed and diarised.

At the time, the DFFE expressed concerns about not having the capacity to fulfil this role, especially on a monthly basis. Some attendees took the view that DFFE should chair WWBF meetings while others suggested various solutions such as electing an alternative Chair. In closing, the Department made a commitment to organise and chair all future engagements stating that the next meeting would take place at the end of June 2023.

Despite this commitment by DFFE, no meetings were scheduled in June, July or August. Representatives of the various organisations have now been informed, after several follow-ups by some WAPFSA members, that the next WWBF engagement will only be scheduled for the 5th of September 2023.

Members of WAPFSA find this unacceptable, particularly given the pressing issues that need to be discussed.
The undersigning members of WAPFSA are concerned that the Department may not have the capacity for important engagement and consultation with our sector, which was a recommendation of the High-Level Panel in 2021 fully supported by the Minister.

If the Department does not have the capacity to chair these meetings with the frequency that is required, and as recommended by the Minister, the Department should allow alternative Chairs.

The Wildlife Animal Forum of South Africa was constituted with the objective of engaging with the Government on specific issues relevant to wildlife protection and well-being. WAPFSA is able to nominate a Chair from within its member ranks, who will have the necessary capacity to fulfil this role.

In addition, and related to the above, on the 19th May 2023, The Wildlife Animal Protection Forum South Africa (WAPFSA) sent the Honourable Minister a letter regarding the consultation processes. An urgent response to this letter is requested.

WAPFSA members look forward to receiving your urgent feedback on this important issue.

Kind regards,

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SIGNED BY THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS OF WAPFSA

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Chairperson

Betty’s Bay Baboon Action Group
Co-Founders

Attorney Kirsten Youens

Wynter Worsthorne

Smaragda Louw

Toni Brockhoven

Renee Bish and Peter Oxford
Centre for Animal Rehabilitation and Education
CLAW
Dzomo La Mupo
EMS Foundation
Four Paws (SA)
Future 4 Wildlife
Gifted for Good
Global White Lion Protection Trust
Institute for Critical Animal Studies (Africa)
Monkey Helpline
Panthera Africa Big Cat Sanctuary
Parliament for the People
Rhinos in Africa
South Peninsula Khoi Council
Southern African Fight for Rhinos
Vervet Monkey Foundation
WildAid Southern Africa

Director       Stephen Munro
Founder        Cora Bailey
Founder – Director Mphatheleni Makaule
Executive Director Michele Pickover
Director       Fiona Miles
Director       Stefania Falcon
Env. Education Jabu Myeni
CEO Founder    Linda Tucker
Director       Les Mitchell
Co-Founder     Steve Smit
Co-Founders    Liz Cornwall and Catherine Nyquist
Reg Farming    Vivien Law
Founder        Megan Carr
Senior Chief   Stephen Fritz
Director       Lex Abnett
Founder        Dave Du Toit
Director       Guy Jenning