



agriculture,  
forestry & fisheries  
Department:  
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



## DIALOGUE TO CELEBRATE WORLD FISHERIES DAY AND WORKSHOP ON SOUTH AFRICAN SWIMWAY PROGRAMME

### Background

World Fisheries Day is celebrated every year on the 21<sup>st</sup> of November throughout the world by fishing communities, conservation authorities, government departments, academia, research organization, NGO's and general public.

### Origins of World Fisheries Day

The origin of World Fisheries Day occurred on the same day that an international fishermen's organization was formed in New Dehli, India. The World Fisheries Forum (WFF) was established on November 21, 1997. On that day, fishing representatives from 18 countries signed a declaration advocating for a global mandate of sustainable fishing practices and policies. The creation of WFF was founded on the common principles of sustaining the fishing communities, sustaining the fisheries, social justice, and preserving the cultural history of fish harvesters and fish workers.

United Nations study reported that more than two-thirds of the world's fisheries have been overfished or are fully harvested and more than one third are in a state of decline because of factors such as the loss of essential fish habitats, pollution, and global warming. This day helps in highlighting the critical importance to human lives, of water and the lives it sustains, both in and out of water. Water forms a continuum, whether contained in rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastal marine and deep oceans. Fish forms an important part of the diets of people around the world, particularly those that live near these water bodies. A number of traditional societies and communities rely on fishing for livelihood while others are interested in sport fishing. The later generates jobs through tourism and fishing competitions.

Besides the importance of water for survival and as a means of transportation, it is also an important source of fish and aquatic protein. Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF), Water and Sanitation and Environmental Affairs share the responsibility for managing fish either for food, monitoring and biodiversity, respectively. On the other hand Water Research Commission has funded and continues to support evidence based policy on managing fish and aquaculture in South Africa. To this extent there are numerous reports that will be showcased at this event to the benefit of all stakeholders.

Besides pollution, habitat degradation, threats from alien and invasive fish, drought and climate change, the disruption of fish migratory routes poses a serious threat to many fish. In some cases, fish ways were built as an after-thought, which resulted in various forms of failures. South African conservation authorities (led by *SANparks-KNP*) in partnership with international Swimway is exploring a national programme to review the fish ways and re-design them using the best international standards. On the 21<sup>st</sup> of November, a further discussion on this matter will take place to solicit ideas on how to implement the programme.

To address the above, the dialogue objectives will include the following:

- Celebrate the role of fish in the society and economy
- Review the SA Fish Swimway Programme vision, mission and initial progress,
- Approve the SA Fish Swimway Programme stakeholder group and responsibilities
- Review existing information/expertise, existing and future research opportunities and
- Refine the plan for the South African Fish Swimway Programme for 2017/8.



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## Agenda

**Date:** 21 November 2016 • **Time:** 09h00 – 17:00

**Venue:** GAU (tbc)

**Facilitator:** Dr Mandla Msibi

| TIME         | PROCESS   | RESPONSIBLE PARTY                |
|--------------|---|----------------------------------|
| 08h30-09h00  | Registration and tea/coffee   |                                  |
| 09h00-09h10  | Welcome & purpose   | Bonani Madikizela (WRC)          |
| 09h10-09h30  | Setting the scene: Fish as source of protein and employment in the light of drought and climate change                        | CEO, Mr Dhesigen Naidoo (WRC)    |
|              | Fish as food security: Policy perspective - DAFF  | Tbc                              |
|              | Fish and its role in biodiversity conservation - KNP  | Tbc                              |
| 20 mins each | The role of freshwater fish in society and the South African economy  | Prof Marius Leibold              |
|              | Southern Africa perspectives fisheries and fish migrations, threats and opportunities   | Prof Olaf Weyl                   |
|              | Migratory requirements of fishes in South Africa and recent fishway developments to mitigate the impacts of physical barriers | Dr Matthew Ross                  |
|              | Fisheries in the Lowveld and community dependence: Case of Nandoni dam?   | Pro Paul Fouche                  |
| 13:00-14:00  | <b>LUNCH</b>  |                                  |
|              | Swimmway Workshop   | Facilitated by Dr Gordon O'Brien |
|              | The SA fish Swimway programme   | Dr Gordon O'Brien                |
|              | Fish migrations, stress, threats and their use in the Phongolo floodplain   | Prof Nico Smit                   |
|              | Lessons from successful conservation of migratory fishes - Yellow fish Working Group of South Africa                          | Dr Peter Mills                   |
|              | Custodians of our rivers and the migratory fishes within them - Catchment Management Agencies in South Africa                 | Mr Marcus Selepe/Keimpe Sinnema  |
|              | Way Forward   | Mr Robert-KNP /Gordon O'Brien    |
| 16:00        | Thanks/Closure  | Dr Shafick Adams                 |



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