

**Report of the Portfolio Committee on Environmental Affairs and Tourism on International Study Tour to Brazillia and Sao-Paulo dated 12 September 2006:**

**1. Introduction and background**

The Portfolio Committee on Environmental Affairs and Toursim having undertaken an International Study to Brazil and Sao Paulo from 14 to 25 April 2006, reports to Parliament as follows:

On the 15 November 2005, the Portfolio Committee on Environmental Affairs and Tourism, under the Chairpersonship of Mr L Zita, took a decision to undertake an international study tour to Brazil during the first term of parliamentary period to learn about the aspects of Brazil's environmental issues that are most relevant to the South African context and oversight function of Brazilian Parliament. Because of the preparation for local government election, the study tour was undertaken during the constituency period from the 14 -25 April 2006.

**2. Objectives**

The main objectives of the visit were to learn about the following issues:

- 2.1 Environmental and biodiversity programmes;
- 2.2 Management of marine and coastal development;
- 2.3 Mechanisms and strategies on climate change and air pollution prevention;
- 2.4 Implementation of Kyoto Protocol;
- 2.5 Implementation of waste management policy and programmes, Eco-tourism and sustainable development; and
- 2.6 Oversight role of the Brazilian Parliament on matters related to environment and tourism.

**3. Delegation**

A multi- party delegation of the Portfolio Committee under the leadership of Chairperson, Mr L Zit, (ANC) included Mr DAA Olifant (ANC); Ms R Ndzanga (ANC); Mr M Swart (DA); and Ms C Zikalala (IFP). The delegation was accompanied by the support staff, Mr T M Manele (Committee Secretary) and Dr F Khan (Committee Researcher).

**4. Overview of the study tour**

The delegation had formal meetings with the Acting Head of the Mission, Executive Secretary of Ministry of Environment and visits to National Parks, Institute of Environmental and Renewal Natural Research, Natural Center for Prevention and Fight against Forest Fires, Center of Remote Sensing, Natural Center of Research, Protect and Handling of Carves, National Parks and tours to the city and in informal settlement.

The interaction with the Ministry and department provided a platform for exploring how Brazil was affected by air pollution, strategies put in place to minimize air pollution and climate change, promotion of forest protection, renewable energy technology, state of aquaculture and mari-culture, domestic marine poaching problems and challenges related to coastal development, urbanization and congestion.

#### **5. Meeting with Executive Secretary to the Ministry of Environment**

The Secretary informed the delegation that Brazilian environmental policy has been undergoing development for over three decades. Its first institutional landmark occurred in 1973, when Brazil created its first Environmental Management Body, within the Presidency of the Republic.

After a period marked by government command and control actions and by initiatives of the fledging organized civil society, in 1981 the National Environment Policy and system were established, together with the National Environmental Council to seek the participation of civil society entities.

As a way to boost the sustainable use of forests and combat public land deforestation, the delegation was informed that the Ministry of Environment has drafted a Bill for Public Forest Management sanctioned by the President on March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2006. This law establishes the rules for the sustainable use of public forests and it also created the Brazilian forest service and the national fund for forest development.

This new legislation defines three forms of public forest management for sustainable production:

- (a) the creation of protected areas for sustainable use, such as national forest;
- (b) destination for community use such as extractive reserves; and
- (c) forest concession contracts based on public bid processes and with payment for the exploration of forest products and services.

The progress made in respect of biodiversity, the delegation was further informed that the Minister of Environment in partnership with the Ministry of Agrarian Development have implemented 11 Centers for Agro-biodiversity management which included the benefits of 5 thousand family farmers settled by the land reform, training of farmers and technicians on sustainable use of agro-biodiversity. The concern about the release of genetically modified organisms to the environment has led the Ministry of Environment to hold four capacity building workshops on GMO bio safety, involving approximately 200 inspectors, researchers, teachers and farmers.

Some of the major biodiversity programmes reported during the briefing included the review of official list and launching of a book of endangered Brazilian Fauna, listing 663 species, organization of symposium on alien invasive species which had participation of

seven countries in order to improve the management of the use of aquatic biodiversity, development of the project on integrated management of aquatic biodiversity, collection of data on current status on biomes and, the launching of first edition of the Atlas on Coral Reefs in Brazilian Protected Areas.

In order to lower the biodiversity loss, the Ministry of Environment has established national plan for protected areas. The main objectives of this plan is to establish by 2015 a broad system of protected areas which are ecologically representative and effectively managed in order to ensure access as well as fair and equitable sharing of costs and benefits stemming from conservation measures. Its main goal is to maintain a focus on the national system of protected areas, indigenous lands and lands of the descendents of former slaves and the creation and consolidation of areas with international recognition such as the Biosphere Reserves and the Natural World Heritage Sites.

Some of the policy development reported to date relate to the drafting of policy on protection, conservation, recovery and sustainable use of biodiversity in indigenous lands by the inter-ministerial group comprised of representatives from the Ministry of Environment, members from Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Research and, indigenous organizations.

On the projects that are currently in place, the delegation was further informed that efforts to improve the quality of water, particularly in the Brazilian semi-arid region, have resulted in the development of projects such as combating deforestation, freshwater, and the program to cleanup river basins. Throughout the country, the government is protecting more than 15 million hectares of public lands by establishing protected areas. The government has also invested in number of projects such as clean up technology, deforestation, marine and coastal management, biodiversity conservation and management, environmental quality and territorial management. Though coordination is at the National Congress and Water Resource Council, the Government has over the past three years approved a set of rules, resolutions and laws that established new regulatory framework and procedures to regulate the activities that endanger the environment.

In the international arena, the actions of the Ministry of Environment to implement multilateral environmental agreements have been noteworthy, particularly with reference to the biological diversity, climate change and desertification conventions, the commission on sustainable development, the United Nations forum on forests and agreements relating to chemical safety.

## **6. National Parks**

The delegation undertook the on-site visit to Chapada Dos Veadeiros National Park located 260 km far from Brasilia. The delegation learnt that partnership with communities adjacent to the park has been established to promote job creation through the training of locals as tour guides. The other lesson the delegation learnt was the promotion of local communities to become entrepreneurs in tourisms restaurants, crafts and curios.

The second on-site visit was conducted at Brazil's National Park. This National Park was created on November 29, 1961 by federal decree 241, and its purpose is the protection of wild areas of biological, scenic, cultural, educational and recreational relevance. In spite of being an urban park and being subject to severe pressure by human action on its 117 km perimeter and on its interior, the park houses animals and plants typical of the Brazilian savannah.

The park houses a great variety of animal life such as anteaters, tapirs, maned wolves, foxes, wild cats and jaguars. In addition to the animals, some birds such as woodpeckers, Brazilian sparrows and hawks are also kept. Reptiles such as lizards, alligators, rattlesnakes and coral snakes are also present, as well as amphibians. The Park has also created an environmental education programme that provides activities to cater for the public in general and for the park's personnel. The courses offered to teachers and the community, are based on the theoretical information and interdisciplinary practices. The park possesses a state-of-the-art management plan and is the heart of the subject for research on various fields of environmental studies.

## **7. Overview of the Institute of Environmental and Renewable Natural Research**

This Brazilian Institute of Environmental and Renewable Natural Research is responsible for the licensing of large polluting potential projects, nuclear activities and the exploration of deep-water petroleum and gas. Through its scientific and technological innovations, the institute has developed and updated a system for reading geo-referenced data on the Amazon forest. This technological innovation and adoption has enabled the institute to delimit with precision deforested areas and to assess the incidence of fire, deforestation, irregular mining activities and invasions.

The institute has established twenty-one specialized centres to carry out studies, technical and scientific research and to provide information on public policies. During the visit, the delegation had an opportunity to visit specialized centres in the areas of environmental information, marine and estuarine fishing, forest management, remote sensing, prevention and control of forest fires that rely on scientific efforts of nationally and internationally renowned researchers. In addition to the above specialized centres, other centres visited included national centre for the prevention and fight against forest fires, centre for orchids, ornamental, medicinal and aromatic plants, national center of research, protection and handling of caves and, laboratory of forest products.

Some of the environmental management lessons learnt during the visit on specialized centres of the above-mentioned Brazilian Institute of Environmental and Renewable Natural Research included; the use of research findings to develop strategies related to forest fire fighting and control, development of guide for environmental licensing of petroleum exploration activities, environmental impact studies of the infrastructure projects, development of information system on environmental licensing which works through the internet warranting better organization of the internal administrative routines and higher transparency of the process.

## 9. Conclusion

No draft programme was received in advance of the study tour. The programme was only received when the delegation arrived in Brasilia. As a result, no additions or changes could be made to the programme, such as a meeting with Members of Congress (the Brazilian Parliament).

The programme only covered three days due to the difficulty of arranging appointments during a week cut short by Easter Monday and a Brazilian national holiday on Friday (21 April).

However, since this information was imparted to the delegation as early as possible, it was possible to extend the programme in Brasilia, it was decided to continue the tour in Sao

## 10. Recommendations

Having undertaken an international study tour to Brazil, the Committee recommends as follows:

- (a) The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism must during the 2006 fourth term of parliamentary period, come and brief the committee on India- Brazil and South Africa Agreement and progress made in respect of project on environment and tourism;
- (b) The Department of Foreign Affairs must in future ensure that proper systems are put in place to facilitate coordination of international visits in accordance with the objectives of the parliamentary committee; and
- (c) In future, the Office of the Mission, should have veto right to advice the Parliamentary Committees not to proceed with envisage study tour if all logistical arrangements in terms of the objectives are not properly arranged

Report to be considered.