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Provincial Government of the Western Cape

MINISTRY

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WELCOME SPEECH BY ANTON BREDELL, MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT,
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING.

ANNUAL BIODIVERSITY REVIEW.

08h30

10 November 2011.

It is indeed an honour and a pleasure to welcome you at this auspicious annual Biodiversity Review event. This year's event marks the 11th review, which kicked off in November 2001.

As many of you are probably aware the purpose of CapeNature's Biodiversity Review is to provide an honest reflection to the Board, to staff and also to our partners in conservation of how the organisation goes about fulfilling its core mandate, namely biodiversity conservation in the Western Cape.

It is very clear to me that the various partnerships which have been established between CapeNature and many of you here today are playing a key role in fulfilling this mandate of not only conserving our biodiversity, but also ensuring its sustainable and equitable utilisation.

I thank you for your continued support and initiative in assisting us to achieve the objectives we have set ourselves.

We were all informed by the world media on 31 October 2011, that the world's population has now reached an estimated 7 billion people. This is a milestone that is going to confront the world with massive challenges.

I also believe that man's ingenuity will be again tested to the full and we will find ways to convert this challenge into countless opportunities that will make a positive difference.

Here in the Western Cape, we fortunately don't need to balance the needs of 7 billion people. However the challenge of ensuring sustainable development and a fair share of our province's natural resources to our diverse communities will present its own unique demands!

In this regard I have no doubt that we will meet this challenge head on because of the commitment of CapeNature and partners like you.

CapeNature is in the privilege position of being custodian to some of the world's most diverse biodiversity that also harbours the highest number of critically endangered ecosystems in the country.

The latest figures indicate that a total of 5 million people or 10% of the national populace are residing in the Western Cape.

Each and every one of these individuals, including all of us here today has the same needs.

These needs range from the need for good quality food, clean water, clean air, jobs, and we can carry on and on as the list is endless.

To my mind however, many of these needs can only be met by a solid platform of healthy biodiversity.

As the custodians of a significant portion of this biodiversity, CapeNature is often challenged with balancing the needs of the biodiversity in its care and those of the various sectors of our communities!

It is only through partnerships with many of you here today that we can continue to balance our biodiversity bank balance and ensure a fair and equitable share of its dividends to our diverse communities.

We are a very blessed province in that we have probably one of the most envied natural environments in the world and our people are justifiably very proud of our region.

Our province is home to three of 34 biodiversity hotspots in the world, eight World Heritage sites and one of only six plant kingdoms on the planet.

We are all therefore directly involved with the preservation, conservation and promotion of our precious region.

We also share this pride with people from all over our beautiful country as well as people from around the world.

In closing let me leave you with a personal request and that is to continue with your robust engagements in taking our special brand of biodiversity conservation into the future!

Finally let's remember that we still need votes for Table Mountain as one of the world's seven wonders of nature and as we now enter the final stage of this process let's come together and proudly stand up and get the last votes in for "our mountain" by sending the sms "Table" to 34874.

I once again thank you for sharing this platform with us today and I look forward to hearing your presentations.