

Benguela ratification process completed

PRETORIA: South Africa has completed the ratification process of the Benguela Current Convention (BCC), says Environmental Affairs Minister Edna Molewa.



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The Benguela Current Convention is a formal agreement, between the three governments of South Africa, Angola and Namibia.

It seeks to promote a coordinated regional approach to the long-term conservation, protection, rehabilitation, enhancement and sustainable use of the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem, to provide economic, environmental and social benefits.

The three governments signed the agreement in March 2013, in Benguela, Angola.

The convention has since undergone a process of ratification by the legislatures and executives of the countries.

The ratification was undertaken in terms of Section 231 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and in relation to Article 22 of the BCC, which subjects the Convention to "ratification, acceptance and approval in accordance with the domestic law and procedures in force in the countries of the Parties".

The objective of the ratification was to give legal effect to the Convention, as its articles are mandatory and legally binding to all signatory parties.

Minister Molewa highlighted that the Convention is in the government's interest as its provisions advance South Africa's goals of protecting the country's marine environment and the large marine ecosystem.

"Never before have nations agreed to such a comprehensive and stringent set of rules to protect the marine environment of a large marine ecosystem, which made it necessary for us to ratify the Convention to suit our domestic legislation," Minister

Molewa said.

She added that the department is of the view that harmonising policies and principles of managing the environment between South Africa and neighbouring nations is beneficial to South Africa and the region.

This, she said, is simply because should one country develop and implement a bad management strategy, South Africa and the region could be adversely affected.

"It is therefore necessary for harmonious policies and principles that promote strong environmental protection regime in the region and the continent at large," she said.

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