

## **MEDIA STATEMENT - 8 July 2004**

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### **Greater Addo Elephant National Park project officially launched**

FOLLOWING the initial planning phase of the project since the year 2000, the World Bank met with the Greater Addo Elephant National Park project (GAENP) team during the past two days to officially launch the \$ 5.5 million implementation phase.

At the same time the recently appointed Project Management Unit (PMU) was introduced. The PMU consists of Mr. Dale Howarth (Project Manager), Mr. Sanjiv Ranchod (Procurement Manager) and Ms. Lana Botha (Financial and Administration Assistant).

The launch workshop dealt with confirming the overall vision, coupled with the objectives for the next six-years of the implementation phase as well as the deliverables for the next six months.

Over the next six years the project's vision is to continue to expand both the terrestrial and marine areas of the park; increase the amount of land under private ownership by way of contractual agreements; to develop an Environmental Monitoring System to determine improvements; to increase employment levels by 30% over an April 2000 baseline and to have capable staff and management systems in place to effectively manage the park.

The park will be the only one in the world offering visitors the "Big 7" experience, comprising the traditional African "Big 5" terrestrial game species (lion, elephant, leopard, rhino, buffalo) plus whales and sharks (including the great white).

Increased direct employment associated with conservation land-use and eco-tourism in the park offers a competitive form of land-use therefore represents a sustainable alternative that meets social requirements.

This does not take into consideration the knock on effect of this tourism activity. The relatively high 50:50 ratio of foreign to local visitors to Addo also bodes well for the regional job creation economy, with possibly as many as 14 000 jobs being created in the region from these tourists alone.

Given the fact that the park is already functional, and there is to be greater diversification of the wildlife product, investment opportunities will be enhanced that will undoubtedly attract further foreign investment and hopefully enhance job creation.

"The World Bank is very happy to see such a well developed designed plan, with a very capable team to execute the project. The success of the GAENP is not that it is merely a plan, but that it is being implemented at such a rapid rate. We are looking forward to the many additional successes which will result from the venture," said Chris Warner, Task Team Leader of the project.

**\*\*\*Ends\*\*\***

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