

IMPACT EVALUATION OF A POSSIBLE LANDING

FACILITY ON MARION ISLAND

As a result of confusing reports which have appeared in the media, I consider it necessary to clarify the situation and place matters in perspective.

The responsibility for Marion Island and related functions were transferred to the Department of Environment Affairs during October 1985. An aspect which received the early attention of the new management was the high costs involved in servicing the island in emergency situations. During the past 4 years it was necessary to mount four emergency voyages.

The Department is also responsible for the control of fishing in South African waters. The fishing zone ^{around} ~~award~~ Marion Island, which is South African territory, receives very little attention at present and control in the zone must of necessity be upgraded to a considerable extent. It is also clear that much more information is required about the fishing potential of that region. It seems likely that people will in future pay more regular visits to the island and that the need for better and more reliable contact will be of growing importance. Furthermore search and rescue operations necessitate that a through study be made of the possibility of providing a usable landing facility in the area.

For some time now the idea of providing a landing strip of some sort on the island has been bandied about, particularly with a view to facilitating the movement of personnel. Because I am aware of the sensitivity of the environment of Marion Island, I approved, as a first step, that a through ecological evaluation of the construction of a landing strip on Marion Island be undertaken.

Consequently I decided that an environmental impact evaluation should be done completely independent of the Department. To this end a Working Group of ⁸recognized scientists from various disciplines has been established, one of whom is from abroad. The Working Group is under the

leadership of Dr G Heyman, Vice President of the CSIR and chairman of the South African Scientific Committee for Antarctic Research.

I wish to emphasize that the findings of the Working Group will be decisive in the decision-making process as to whether a landing facility will be provided or not on Marion Island.

ISSUED BY MINISTER J W E WILEY,
MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AFFAIRS AND OF WATER AFFAIRS
29 DECEMBER 1986

IMPAKEVALUERING VAN MOONTLIKE VLIEGTUIGLANDINGSTROOK

TE MARIONEILAND

As gevolg van verwarrende berigte wat in die nuus media verskyn het, is dit vir my nodig om sake duidelik in perspektief te stel.

Die verantwoordelikheid vir Marioneiland en verwante aangeleenthede is gedurende Oktober 1985 aan die Departement van Omgewingsake oorgedra. Een aspek wat onder die aandag van die nuwe bestuur gebring is, is die hoë koste wat in die verlede aangegaan is om die eiland tydens noodsituasies te bereik. In die afgelope vier jaar is reeds by vier geleenthede noodvaarte na die eiland onderneem.

Die Departement is verder belas met die beheer oor visseryaangeleenthede in Suid-Afrikaanse waters. Die vissery sone rondom Marioneiland, wat RSA grondgebied is, geniet tans minimale aandag en beheer aldaar moet noodsaaklikerwyse opgeskerp word. Hierbenewens is dit nodig om baie meer kennis op te doen oor die vispotensiaal in dié gebied. Dit wil dus blyk dat 'n groter aantal mense meer gereeld op die eiland gevestig sal moet word en dat meer en makliker kontak wenslik is. Verder noodsaak soeken reddingspogings deeglike ondersoek na die moontlike aanbring van 'n bruikbare aanloopbaan in die omgewing.

Vir geruime tyd word reeds besin oor die wenslikheid om 'n vliegtuiglandingstrook op Marioneiland met die oog daarop om plasing van personeel aldaar te kan vergemaklik. Omdat ek terdeë bewus is van die omgewingsensitiwiteit van Marioneiland, het ek as eerste stap goedgekeur dat 'n deeglike ekologiese waardering vir 'n landingstrook op Marioneiland uitgevoer word.

Ek het derhalwe gelas dat die impakwaardering onafhanklik van die Departement uitgevoer word. Vir die doel het ek 'n werkgroep aangestel wat bestaan uit vier erkende wetenskaplikes uit verskillende vakdissiplines - waaronder een buitelanders. Die werkgroep sal onder leiding van dr G Heymann, Adjunk-president van die WNNR en Voorsitter van die Suid-Afrikaanse Wetenskaplike Komitee vir Antarktiese Navorsing, staan.

Ek wil dit beklemtoon dat die werkgroep se bevindings deurslaggewend sal wees in die besluitnemings proses of 'n aanloopbaan wel op Marioneiland gebou sal word al dan nie.

UITGEREIK DEUR MINISTER J W E WILEY,
MINISTER VAN OMGEWINGSAKE EN VAN WATERWESE
29 DESEMBER 1986