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Department:
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MEDIA STATEMENT

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FIRE AT MANYANE GAME LODGE AND ELEPHANT POPULATION GROWTH AT MADIKWE GAME RESERVE

The Department of Economic Development Environment Conservation and Tourism (DEDECT) in the North West Province would like to keep the public informed about the recent developments at Manyane Game Lodge in Mahikeng and the issue of elephant population growth at Madikwe Game Reserve in Bojanala District.

On the question of Manyane Game Lodge, DEDECT confirms the following: On the 03rd December 2024, fire started in the afternoon as a subcontractor was busy waterproofing roof level concrete water channels on top of completed structures. The thatch roofing had been completed on the affected structures. Apparently they used gas torches with open flame to stretch materials used.

During this process, thatch material from the building they were working on caught fire. Wind fanned the fire and blew it across to the nearby building. All in all three buildings were gutted – restaurant, conference hall and the entrance gate.

Mafikeng fire services had responded to the incident and has been working hard to minimize damages. All the flames were doused off by 16h00. In the end, the three structures have lost their roofs completely while the brickworks are still standing. The chalets are not affected in fire and are still intact.

Technical staff and Working on Fire teams are on site to ensure that the fire does not affect the reserve area.

On the question of Madikwe Game Reserve, DEDECT confirms the following: The department note the concerns raised by The True Green Alliance Wildlife NGO on the starvation and death of elephants in Madkwe Game Reserve. The conservation unit in the department has indicated that the elephant population at Madikwe Game Reserve has been growing at a fast pace over the 30 years. The elephant population expanded to more than 1600 in 2024.

MEC Bitsa Lenkopane has instructed Conservation Specialist in the department to consider all scientific methods of controlling elephant population growth at Madikwe Game Reserve in order prevent the ongoing negative impact on biodiversity in the park. MEC Lenkopane said "the team should explore options which include but not limited to non-lethal methods of population control such

as translocations of elephants to other parks in the country or any of the SADC countries that has diplomatic relations and bilateral agreements with the government of South Africa on environment and conservation."

DEDECT is assembling a team of experts to investigate the Manyane Game Lodge fire incident. The department is also engaging the National Department of Tourism since renovations at Manyane Game Lodge is a collaborative effort between the two spheres of government.

**Issued by the Department of Economic Development, Environment, Conservation and
Tourism**

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