



MASIFUNDISE DEVELOPMENT TRUST

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Media Statement

Issued by: **Naseegh Jaffer - Director Masifundise**

Subject: **Equality Court Judge issues new interim relief fishing order**

Date: **20 November 2008**

On Wednesday 18 November 2008 Equality Court judge Nathan Erasmus signed a new equality court order instructing the Minister of Environmental Affairs & Tourism to issue interim relief fishing permits to traditional small scale fishers while a comprehensive fishing policy for this sector is being finalised. This court order states that the Minister should be ready to gazette a new small scale fishing policy by 30 June 2009. The policy would have been developed in consultation with fisher community representatives.

This second Equality Court order results from intense negotiations between Marine & Coastal Management branch of DEAT, Masifundise, Coastal Links and the Artisanal Fishers Association - all who represent small-scale fishing communities - over the last few weeks.

Using the recreational total allowable catch allocation, the court order allows the Minister to give these fishers an exemption permit that departs from the normal regulations by allowing them to catch a maximum of 20 crayfish on any given day of the week and a combination of 30 specified linefish per day. This catch may be sold which is not normally allowed under the recreational fishing regulations. Only a maximum of 1000 fishers, who meet stringent criteria, can benefit from this concession. Monitors will be employed and trained to ensure that the permit conditions are adhered to.

Further, the order allows for Masifundise and MCM to negotiate an appropriate relief mechanism for identified fishers from the Arniston area, who cannot draw any relief from the current interim relief package, by end December 2008.

Naseegh Jaffer, Masifundise Director, was jubilant about this court order: "this great news comes at the right time of the year for poor destitute fishers. Now they can at least earn a very basic income from the beginning of the summer fishing season." He also appealed to all fishers to comply with the permit conditions and to cooperate with monitors and compliance officers.

Jaffer also cautioned Minister Van Schalkwyk and Marine and Coastal Management not to delay finalising the new policy. "We are tired of having to run to court to

defend the rights and livelihoods of traditional fishers. The Department must finalise the policy now or face the risk of serious social upheaval in fishing communities.”

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