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MEDIA

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For Immediate Release

**Awareness Highlights Conservation Issues at SANParks
Kudu Awards 2019**

South African National Parks (SANParks) supported by Total South Africa and First National Bank (FNB) recognised deserving conservationists at this year's Kudu Awards ceremony held at Gallagher Convention Centre in Midrand this evening (29 November 2019). The awards were made possible thanks to forward-thinking and progressive partners who together, recognised internal and external stakeholders that have demonstrated exceptional commitment to sustainability, improving livelihoods, achieving real change on the ground in our national parks.

The Kudu Awards and the Chief Executive Awards recognise SANParks employees as well as multiple stakeholders and disciplines who play a pivotal role in strengthening conservation in South Africa. According to Fundisile Mketeni, SANParks CEO, "Awareness of conservation issues is of vital importance and if we want to better protect our national parks either through anti-poaching efforts or finding solutions to climate change we need to educate and inform the public. Our stakeholders such as the media are key in this goal. Tonight we honour several media contributors who are leading the way in informing the world about the various conservation efforts around the country."

Anti-poaching is one of the toughest challenges facing conservation today and every effort is made to ensure that SANParks and the world at large can tackle wildlife crime head on. One of tonight's winners, created an outstanding rhino awareness tool through the medium of storytelling.

The independent documentary feature film STROOP - Journey into the Rhino Horn War gives an in-depth look at the rhino poaching crisis in South Africa as well as the demand for rhino horn in Asia. Filmmakers Susan Scott and Bonné de Bod took four years to film the documentary. This Kudu Award is yet another notch on the bedpost.

“As a corporate, we consider ourselves as more than just an energy company. We aim to lead the way in creating sustainable solutions and we are committed to environmental conservation. To us, conservation is a collective responsibility, it is for all of us to undertake. We need to continue to play an influential role in the preservation of the natural environment and encourage collective action through our operations, cultures and investments. Therefore, we would like to thank SANParks for this initiative and for all the extraordinary efforts of those individuals constantly working towards a common goal without fear or hesitation, in the fight for a future for our natural environments”, says Total’s Managing Director and CEO, Mariam Kane-Garcia.

Sipho Silinda, CEO of FNB Public Sector Banking, said the Kudu Awards are an important reminder to us as society to remain committed to ensuring the sustenance of South Africa’s natural environment. The outstanding effort demonstrated by those individuals whose sole mission is the conservation of wildlife for our future generations should be widely celebrated. As a nation, we need to follow their lead and guidance as they are already ahead in this journey. The conservation of wildlife feeds directly into the tourism sector, an industry that remains vibrant and is a significant contributor to the country’s GDP, despite the tough economic conditions. Conservation is one of the ways of ensuring the tourism sector can continue contributing towards economic growth through job creation.

The Awards evening which also included the Chief Executive Awards recognizes dedication and selfless efforts of SANParks employees towards achieving the goals of SANParks’ mandate. A total of 29 Chief Executive Awards

were given out this year ranging from the Shield Award, Best Customer Service, Best Constituency Builder, Best Ranger Post, Best Performing Camp, Best Performing Park of the Year, Best Performing Entrance Gate/ Reception, Excellent Performance in the workplace, Overall Best Performer, Best Performing Division, Best Leadership Award, CEO Special Award to the Website Community Choice Award.

*****Ends*****

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