

14 August 2019

## LAUNCH OF THE SKUKUZA RADAR: 14 AUGUST 2019

The South African Weather Service launched a new weather radar at Skukuza, National Kruger Park on Wednesday, 14 August 2019.

The launch marks a notable milestone towards strengthening the capability of the South African Weather Service to provide early warning services for severe weather especially to vulnerable and weather sensitive communities and industries. Furthermore, the newly launched radar will assist in extending our services to some parts of Mozambique which is frequently battered by tropical cyclones, floods and devastations.

A weather RADAR (Radio Frequency Detection and Ranging) is a remote sensing system that detects and tracks the movement of objects, such as clouds, their direction, distance and speed, as well as the presence of precipitation, for example rain, snow, hail, etc.

While the impacts of extreme events, driven by climate change and variability are dealing a setback to the efforts of poverty eradication, food security, health, water provision and sustainable development, the availability of this crucial strategic asset and its information for responding to these events will greatly assist in planning and adaptation strategies for climate change.

The radar's reach, which extends to 200 km radius, includes the Mpumalanga Lowveld, southern Limpopo, southern Mozambique and Swaziland. While the availability of radar will not prevent severe storms from happening, its strategic placement will undoubtedly improve the ability of the South African Weather Service to timeously provide relevant warnings to disaster management structures and communities

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In February 2007, the first Skukuza radar, a refurbished S-band radar based on the 1976 Enterprise Electronic Corporation (EEC) model radar, was commissioned. As that radar came to the end of its life in 2018, the C-band radar at our Port Elizabeth office was earmarked as a suitable replacement. The new Skukuza radar is based on a 1988 model radar, which is still relevant today. While it has some limitations, this type of weather radar remains crucial for identifying and tracking the presence of weather targets in the atmosphere, especially severe thunderstorms. This radar could be functional for another 4-5 years before a complete replacement needs to be undertaken.

The new radar adds to the weather observations network of the South African Weather Service in the Kruger National Park, and its launch reflects the excellent relationship and cooperation between the South African Weather Service and SANParks in terms of maintaining this strategic equipment.

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