MINISTER
TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY:

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5680. Ms N R Mashabela (EFF) to ask the Minister of Tourism:

(1) What are the reasons for the (a) total underspending of R201 million and (b) R120,54 million underspending in the Destination Development Programme of her department while the Republic is experiencing mass unemployment;

(2) whether any officials in her department have been held accountable for the specified procurement irregularity; if not, why not; if so, what consequence management has taken place?

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REPLY

(1)(a) The underspending was attributable to the following factors across the Department's programmes:

- **Administration Programme**: Underspending of R33.262 million, mainly due to savings on office accommodation, cell phone costs and audit fees, as well as delayed or outstanding invoices from the Office of the State Attorney relating to legal fees. Vacant funded posts also contributed to the underspending.
- **Tourism Research, Policy and International Relations Programme**: Underspending of R11.147 million, primarily due to savings on venues and facilities, travel and subsistence, resulting from increased virtual meetings and changes in the delivery approach of certain projects. Savings on contributions to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation resulted from foreign exchange rate fluctuations. Vacant management positions also contributed to the underspending.

- **Destination Development Programme**: Underspending of R120.540 million, mainly attributable to delays in appointing service providers for skills development projects under the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), slower-than-expected progress with infrastructure projects, savings on cell phone costs and travel and subsistence, and vacant funded posts.
- **Tourism Sector Support Services Programme**: Underspending of R36.028 million, primarily due to savings on travel and subsistence and consultancy services, as well as vacant funded posts.

(1)(b) R 120.54 million was underspent in the Expanded Public Works Programme. Of this amount, R30 million was allocated to Infrastructure Projects, and the remaining R90 million to skills projects. The underspend on infrastructure projects was largely due to the delayed start of the Platfontein project in the Northern Cape, which was initially anticipated to commence on 1 January 2026 but only commenced in April 2026; therefore, project spend on this project was not realised by 31 March 2026.

This project is currently under construction, and the anticipated completion date is 30 July 2027. The R 90 million underspend on skills projects is mainly attributable to delays in appointing service providers for skills development projects funded through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP).

(2) The alleged irregular expenditure recorded in the Annual Report for the 2025/26 financial year is under dispute and is reported to National Treasury under the dispute resolution mechanism.

END