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**MINISTRY OF TOURISM**

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY:**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY:**

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**Mr P van Dalen (DA) to ask the Minister of Tourism:**

Whether the engagements with the airline industry on making domestic airfares more affordable and advancing airlift, as per the National Tourism Strategy, have been completed, if not, why not; if so, what (a) are the outcomes of the engagements, (b) steps are being taken by his department taking to implement the outcomes and (c) is the expected timeline of implementation?

**Reply:**

1. The Minister has had engagements with the Airlines Association of Southern Africa (AASA), and

the Board of Airlines Representatives of South Africa (BARSA) in 2015 and 2016 to discuss common issues affecting tourism and airlift. These engagements emphasised the need for accessible air transportation and ensuring air connectivity to tourism products throughout the country. Although airfares are determined by market forces (including oil prices), the department has consistently engaged civil aviation stakeholders to ensure transparency in the determination of the cost of airport user charges, air navigation and surveillance cost which contributes to the setting of airfares.

1. The Department of Tourism continuously engages on matters of air transport strategy with the Department of Transport, who is responsible for the Aviation mandate, and participates in forums led by the Department of Transport to advance the tourism agenda. These include the Strategy Planning Committee and the National Facilitation Committee meetings which are responsible for implementation of civil aviation strategy and planning for intermodal transportation systems respectively. The Department also plays a supportive role to the Department of Transport with regards to their participation, on behalf of South Africa as a member state, in the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).
2. As both airfares and airlift are not the direct mandate of the Department of Tourism there are no specific projects and therefore no project timelines. The Department of Tourism in collaboration with SA Tourism remains committed to working with all stakeholders involved with the air transport strategy and engages with them timeously if new matters arise that might have an impact on tourism.