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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 J Vos (DA) to ask the Minister of Tourism:**

What are the (a) details of her department’s plans to work together with other government departments to consider what relief measures can be implemented in the medium term to revive the tourism economy following the devastating fires in Knysna and (b) timelines in this regard? NW2153E

**Reply:**

1. From discussions between the Department of Tourism, South African Tourism, Provincial and Local authorities and the Knysna Tourism Organisation, it is clear that the extent of damage to tourism infrastructure is yet to be fully assessed and defined. Based on preliminary assessments and needs, in the interim, the Department of Tourism will provide support through the Working for Tourism Expanded Public Works Programme to absorb employees from the affected establishments into short-term further training (with stipends) programmes in hospitality. SA Tourism will communicate positive messaging, both locally and internationally towards restoring the tourism image of Knysna. The Department of Tourism in partnership with the provincial and local authorities, the Department of Labour and Home Affairs has also facilitated the processing of Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) and Identity Document applications for affected Knysna residents.
2. Initial meetings between the Department of Tourism, SA Tourism and provincial and local authorities took place in the weeks of the 5th and 12th June 2017. At present, local authorities are still compiling reports on the impact of the fires on communities, private and public property. The immediate priorities are to care for the destitute and homeless. It is anticipated that a clearer picture of the support required by the tourism sector will emerge towards the middle of July 2017, where after further plans can be developed.