**National Assembly**

**Question No:1026**

**Mr K P Sithole (IFP) to ask the Minister of Transport:**

Following the recent operational issues at the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (PRASA), in respect of which the United National Transport Union has noted a few concerns and chief among them being that commuters bear the brunt of the inconsistencies and inactivity of trains, (a) what (i) are the reasons that PRASA has not paid Transnet for the diesel locomotives and (ii) amount has been allocated to boost security on trains and train stations and (b) how has his department intervened at PRASA to ensure that the staff is not unduly affected by the issues with trains being inoperative? NW1273E

**REPLY**

(a) (i) PRASA was paying for the locomotives through a separate agreement from the main agreements. However, Transnet chose to withdraw the locomotives as a result of the R2,3 billion in operational debt owed to it by PRASA. This is therefore Transnet’s choice to disable passenger rail with the withdrawal of these locomotives. The reason for the large outstanding balance due to Transnet is as a result of the inequitable split of assets and incorrect funding model at the original separation of the two entities. The separation saw Transnet charging PRASA along commercial lines whilst its funding model did not cater for this arrangement, resulting in a large underfunding of passenger rail.

(ii) A special allocation of R900 million was provided by National Treasury to assist with security over and above the general security budget of R1,1 billion allocated to PRASA. Although all of this special allocation was expected to be spent on further securing passengers and stations, R500 million of this had to be spent on asset protection during the riots and for the validity period of the Hlope judgement, none of which was budgeted for or expected. The balance of R400 million in addition to the general security budget is being used to protect passengers and assets.

(b) PRASA continues to pay its staff during the period of the pandemic and resulted in PRASA being in a far better position to continue working harder on its mandate towards bring the ten (10) corridors into operations.