**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 1029 / NW1122E**

**MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES:**

**Mr N Paulsen (EFF) to ask the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries:**

**QUESTION:**

(1)  Whether, with reference to his reply to question 263 on 20 March 2018, he has been informed that a certain person is occupying a State house at Lower Zingcuka that was previously used as a community crèche; if so, (a) what are the terms and conditions attached to the continued use of the house and (b) will he furnish Mr N Paulsen with a copy of the signed agreement that allowed the person to use the house;

(2)  In view of the fact that the Amathole Forestry Company is not involved in agricultural production in the Lower Zingcuka and surrounding villages, what specific role does the person play that warranted the State granting him the use of the property over a community crèche?  **NW1122E**

**REPLY:**

**Response to Sub-question (1)**

The matter of a state house being occupied by Amathole Forestry Company representative was only brought to my attention when the Honourable Member asked the question. Part of the state assets transferred to Lower Zingcuka community is a residential house that was used by agricultural extension officers during the Ciskei government. It should be pointed out that DAFF was never involved in this process. However, it was established that that house in question was abandoned and vandalised. The community took a decision to preserve the house and used it as a crèche. Unfortunately vandalism on the property continued unabated. Subsequently, Lower Zingcuka Agricultural Cooperative Limited in agreement with the community took over the use of the house for business purposes. The cooperative stores its implements and a tractor at the property. Through the partnership described under response to question 1028, Mr Jerry of Amathole Forestry Company was deployed to the Wolf River area by Rance Rural Development Agency to provide technical support to the cooperative and other villages in the area. Through the agreement of both the community and the cooperative, Mr Jerry was given permission to reside in the house.

**Response to Sub-Question (2)**

Even after the partnership between AFC and the cooperatives lapsed, Mr Jerry continues to reside in the house providing production related technical support to other communities in the area. Mr Jerry also services the tractor belonging to the cooperative and other equipment, even though there is no formal contract in place. It has been established that the continued stay of Mr Jerry at the house is per agreement by the community and the youth cooperative due to the value of the services that he provides to them. Mr Jerry has become part of the community and provides various forms of assistance to members of the community.

In conclusion, there are no formal agreements or documents signed between the state and Amathole Forestry Company allowing Mr Jerry to use the house in question. This is a matter between the community, Lower Zingcuka Agricultural Cooperative and Amathole Forestry Company. The continued stay of Mr Jerry at the house is purely based on the value that he (Mr Jerry) brings to the community. Should the community wish to reclaim the use of the house, it is envisaged that they will engage Mr Jerry personally who has expressed his willingness and readiness to vacate the property should the community so wish.