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**MINISTRY OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE**

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO.:** **1129**

**Inkosi B N Luthuli (IFP) to ask the Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture:**

Whether he will furnish Inkosi B N Luthuli with an update and/or relevant details on the digitalisation of the National Archives project; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details NW1268E

**REPLY:**

Yes, we are delighted to share the update on this project. For a very long period the National Archives and Records Service of SA (NARSSA) partnered with other institutions to digitise archival records due to lack of resources. The first digitisation project started in 2014/2015.

In 2020/21, as part of the Presidential Employment Stimulus Package (PESP), the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa (NARSSA) was allocated an amount of R30 million in response to the job losses that came as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The allocation was mainly used towards the appointment of 163 unemployed youth to assist in the digitisation of archival records. Another portion was to procure digitisation equipment. The project came to an end on 31 August 2022, however, the National Archives continues to digitise more records.

The success of digitisation at NARSSA was made possible by the funding received through PESP and through partnerships with other institutions. To date the following projects have been undertaken.

**Rivonia Trial Dictabelts**:

The digitisation of the Rivonia Trial dictabelts emanated from a joint project between the DAC and the INA (French National Audio-Visual Institute). This project started in 2013 when the first agreement was signed with France with INA. The first batch of dictabelts were handed over in 2014 and the 2nd batch in 2015, and handed over to DAC in 2016. Training of archivists formed part of the agreement and the first training took place in France in 2018. In total 591 Rivonia Trial dictabelts were digitized and were thereafter made available for public access on the National Archives website. SA now has equipment to digitise other collections that are in this format such as the Dimitri Tsafendas’ case which is preserved at the Western Cape Archives

**Treason Trial dictabelts**:

The collection is estimated to 3 250 dictabelts in total. To date 1650 dictabelts were digitised. The project was made possible by the employment of the youth who were appointed as part of the Presidential Employment Stimulus Package Project

**Truth and Reconciliation Commission audio tapes**: 2100 audio visual records were digitised. This was also made possible by the employment of PESP Interns.

**Truth and Reconciliation Commission**: 118 375 records have been digitised. These include the Amnesty Decisions, Special Sector Hearings, Human Rights Violation Hearings of Cape Town, Gauteng, East London and KwaZulu Natal. Currently NARSSA is digitising Amnesty Hearings

**CODESA, Multi-Party Negotiating Forum, the Constitutional Assembly**: The National Archives partnered with the Constitutional Hill Trust to digitise records that led to Democracy. CODESA was the first to be digitised. The collection comprises of 37 796 -paper records CODESA and the Multiparty Negotiating Forum are the only collection that is now accessible online. NARSSA will be digitising approximately 870 boxes of the Independent Electoral Commission before the end of the current financial year.

The targets that were set for the 2022/23 financial year are as follows:

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| ITEM | TARGET | ACHIEVEMENT |
| Number of pages digitised | 30 000 | 84 982 |
| Number of photographs digitised | 0 | 21 791 (the collection was initially not included for digitisation as an investigation regarding online publishing was required |
| Number of Treason Trial dictabelts digitised | 150 | 463 |
| Number of TRC Audio tapes digitised | 90 | 1 721 |

It should be noted that the film digitisation equipment is still not available to allow NARSSA to digitise records. This is due to the fact that the equipment is not available in the country, it needs to be imported in order to digitise film. NARSSA is currently investigating other alternatives such as the identification of other partners who might have the equipment or to outsource this function or import the equipment.

Digitisation is an ongoing process that requires skilled personnel and resources. For the 2023/24 financial year, the National Archives has appointed 10 unemployed youth for a period of 6 months to assist in the digitisation of records. It is envisaged that this number and the project period will increase pending the approval of the digitisation project proposal submitted to the National Treasury.

The ultimate goal is to avail these records for online access.