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**MINISTER OF TOURISM**

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY:**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY:**

**Question Number: 1233**

**Date of Publication: 18 October 2019**

**NA IQP Number: 20**

**Date of reply: 28 October 2019**

**Mr M S F de Freitas (DA) to ask the Minister of Tourism:**

What (a) is the relationship between his department and provincial departments responsible for the various world heritage sites to ensure maximum tourism attraction to the sites and (b) processes, procedures and/or mechanisms exist to maintain and upgrade the world heritage sites? NW2444E

**Reply:**

1. **Relationship between his department and provincial departments responsible for WHS to ensure maximum tourism attraction to sites?**

The Department of Tourism has signed Memoranda of Understanding and Agreements (MOU and MOA) with the *relevant* Management Authorities of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites in each province, to unlock the potential and competitiveness of tourism in these World Heritage Sites (WHSs).

1. **Mechanisms to maintain and upgrade world heritage sites**

Through the aforementioned partnerships, the Department of Tourism has provided support for tourism infrastructure development and maintenance (i.e. Destination Enhancement Initiatives) such as tourism signage, construction of Visitor Information Centres (Interpretation Centres), Accommodation Facilities, Walkways and Hiking Trails, and tourism infrastructure maintenance in order to improve the quality of product offerings in WHSs to enhance the visitor experience.

This work has been completed in partnership with Management Authorities at the Robben Island Museum (WC), Cradle of Humankind (GP), iSimangaliso Wetland Park (KZN), Maloti Drakensberg Transfronteir Park (KZN), Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape (LP), Khomani Cultural Landscape (Kgalagadi Transfronteir Park - NC), Barberton Makhonjwa Mountains(MP), Richtersveld Cultural Landscape (NC), Cape Floral Region (WC & EC) and Vredefort Dome (FS). This joint work has also included the upskilling of guides at various WHSs.

As part of a pilot project to retrofit iconic tourism attractions with renewable energy solutions, the department also installed a solar photovoltaic (PV) mini-grid system at Robben Island that integrates a 666.4 kilowatt peak (kWp) solar PV plant with battery back-up and the existing diesel generation system of the island to significantly reduces the island’s reliance on diesel and lower operating costs.