**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY:**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY:**

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

(1) Whether her department has conducted a damage assessment on tourism in KwaZulu-Natal after the recent floods; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;

(2) whether her department has produced a sector specific plan on how to rebuild the pillars that drive tourism in KwaZulu-Natal; if not, why not; if so, what incentives does her department offer or intends to offer to the youth in particular to assist in rebuilding the pillars in the tourism sector of KwaZulu-Natal? NW1739E

**REPLY:**

The Minister has been briefed of the impact of the floods on tourism infrastructure. This was done during the recent site inspections by a team from the Department of Tourism; EDTEA; TKZN; Ezemvelo and the KZN Sharks Board: - (19 April 2022), to the following sites: -

* *Two World Heritage Sites* - iSimangaliso Wetland Park and uKhahlamba-Drakensberg Park focusing on Didima Nature Reserve
* *Big 5 Game Reserve* - Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park
* *Coastal & Marine Tourism and Coastal Belt* - Dakota Beach in Isipingo, Margate, Salt Rock Beach Front, Ballito, St. Lucia)
* *Midlands Tourism Route* – Mandela Capture Site, Howick Falls, Midmar Game Reserve, etc.

The intention was to undertake assessments of sites that have relatively high impact on the value-chain to drive local tourism development and recovery post the pandemic, thus having socio-economic bearing on affected neighboring communities.

***Findings***

The damage wreaked by the floods is in various categories, *viz*:-

* Damage at beaches include debris, damage to dunes as well as damage to safety nets etc;
* Infrastructure and services, including water and electricity, roads and bridges;
* Structural damage to buildings, including roofs and walls.
* While King Shaka International Airport experienced water damage in parts of the terminal, there was no disturbance to operations and flights are operating as scheduled (not part of the inspections by the team).

Based on the latest available information from these areas, the total estimated damage thus far is about, R131 445 000,00. KZN has indicated that cases for immediate attention amount to about R89 595 000, while the balance can be undertaken over the medium term.

Fortunately, the overall impact is that tourism will not face long term negative impact. Arrangements were made by the Province and local authorities to clean up the beaches by removing the debris and other objects that affect access thereto. Relevant Provincial and municipal Departments and entities have commenced work in restoring/repairing infrastructure and services crucial to communities and business, e.g. raids, bridges etc. In some of the areas e.g. Isipingo, local communities have been closely involved in the cleanup of the beaches and we are grateful to them for lending a hand. At the moment access to beaches in some areas is possible and normal beach activities can take place.

(2) The reconstruction of the infrastructure is being assessed by the relevant lead departments. Progress is being communicated to the public in the normal course. As a department, we will contribute to the extent required where possible once the Province has concluded associated processes regarding the nature of support. This is also to ensure that there is no duplication of resources.

As regards the specific tourism infrastructure, the owners have during engagement indicated that some have insurance to cover some of the damage and mainly want speedy reconstruction of the affected bulk infrastructure. The Department working with the Provincial Authorities will ascertain the extent to which tourism specific support may be required and if necessary look into reprioritisation of resources. Again, this is based on the understanding that there should not be a duplication of resources.

The overall assessment is that there has not been fundamental disruption of the province’s tourism offerings. Based on the assessment, the department has no separate initiatives for the floods but is working with the province to assist in recovery of the affected site.