**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 1528**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER [No 15-2022 SIXTH PARLIAMENT]
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**1528. Mr N S Matiase (EFF) to ask the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development:**

What is the reason that her department has not taken any steps to protect South African agricultural products in the face of unfair and hostile competition, including adjusting the general tariffs that they charge all countries, except those with whom they share preferential trading blocs? **NW1852E**

**THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT:**

The question does not specify which agricultural products are unprotected in the face of unfair and hostile competition, nor does it provide details regarding tariff adjustments; countries are also not specified. As a result, the Department finds it challenging to provide a specific response to the question.

South Africa is a member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and abides by the rules as agreed by the Member States within the organisation. The primary task of WTO is to facilitate the rules of trade among the nations. Amongst others, the rules of trade within the organisation hinges on the principles of reciprocity and non-discrimination among the trading partners. This avoids a situation where the single (dominant) decision-maker takes decisions that leave the individuals in the group with an outcome that is less than optimal for individuals as a group. South Africa therefore, has to be cautious in its approach when trading with other nations such that it does not come across as overly protective through tariff and non-tariff barriers. If perceived to be overly protective, which amounts to breaking the rules of WTO, the trading partners may reciprocate, to the detriment of the economy. Alternatively, partner countries may retaliate by seeking alternative markets.

DALRRD considers circumstances as they emerge and makes appropriate policy recommendations in line with trade remedies prescribed by existing agreements in advancing and defending national interests.