**MINISTRY**

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION**

 **REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

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 **QUESTION**

**1665. The Leader of the Opposition (DA) to ask the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation:**

What are the full details of (a) all the (i) monies, (ii) loans, (iii) aid and (iv) goods and services that have been spent on Cuba since he became President on 15 February 2018 and (b) the explanation of why the Government has chosen Cuba as a beneficiary of South African aid and assistance? NW1993E

**REPLY**

1. (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) A loan was made available to Cuba under an Economic Assistance Agreement for agricultural development projects as well as reconstruction of infrastructure.

The loan was divided into two tranches. The first tranche of R63 million was made available in 2018. The Cuban government has fully repaid the loan.

The second tranche of R84 631 000 million was made available in 2021. The Cuban government has been repaying the loan since December 2021.

The total loan to Cuba since 2018 is R147 631 000.

1. The relationship between South Africa and Cuba dates back well before the 1994 democratic elections, and the friendship and solidarity with Cuba should be viewed within the context of the significant contribution that Cuba made to the liberation of South Africa. The South African Government signed an Agreement on Economic Assistance with the Government of the Republic of Cuba on 3 February 2012, entering into force on 21 November 2012. The 2012 Agreement was one of the outcomes of the 2010 State Visit to Cuba by the then South African President. The latter announced that South Africa would offer Cuba an Economic Assistance Package to assist with agricultural development projects as well as reconstruction of infrastructure, following the damage caused by devastating hurricanes in the Caribbean in 2008.

The Economic Assistance Package enhanced economic collaboration with Cuba especially through improved bilateral trade and increased goodwill from the people of Cuba. Through the package exports of South African agricultural products, plastic resins, dump trucks and tires were increased, jobs were created and retained, there was business reinvestment, consumer support to the RSA manufacturing sector, and channels for payment from Cuba were established