**MINISTRY**

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION**

 **REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTTEN REPLY**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

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**1955. Ms T P Msane (EFF) to ask the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation**:

What interventions is the Government pursuing in the African Union (AU) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) in curbing and preventing the deaths of young women and men who enter into child marriages, as it has been observed that all previous measures such as the AU campaign held in 2014 – 17 period and the SADC Model Law on Eradicating Child Marriage and Protecting Children already in marriage, signed in 2016, have not been effective? **NW2187E**

**REPLY:**

South Africa’s foreign policy is based on its Constitutional values and principles central to which are the rights of the Child. In the context of the post-apartheid era where an array of laws and frameworks have been put in place to protect the child, South Africa has complemented these with actions at the regional, continental and United Nations level.

In order to build on the AU campaign and promote the SADC Model Law, the AU followed up with the End Child Marriage campaign that is based on the 5 Year Strategic Plan, which commenced in 2019 to 2023. The AU campaign held in 2014-2017 needed to be built on to provide an environment to enhance the effectiveness of the SADC Model Law. South Africa, at the national level, will work with traditional leaders, teachers, church leaders and social partners to ensure the eradication of this practice in the country.

South Africa has participated in AU and SADC forums and other consultative engagements that have been held to address the issue of Child Marriages in the respective member states. It should be taken into consideration that South Africa participates as part of the collective in these multilateral engagements where member states engage and take individual decisions to domesticate AU and SADC policy positions. In this regard, South Africa as Member State of the African Union (AU) has been in the forefront of the efforts to eradicate this harmful practise including being part of the campaign to End Child Marriage through the 5 year strategic plan (2019-2023).