**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION NO: 1970**

**DATE OF QUESTION: 27 AUGUST 2021**

**DATE OF SUBMISSION: 10 SEPTEMBER 2021**

**Prof C T Msimang (IFP) to ask the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services:**

What (a) measures has his department implemented to reconcile the recent budget cuts with the key cost drivers of his department and (b) is the envisaged outcome of such mitigation measures in the short term?

**NW2203E**

**REPLY:**

1. The following efficiency measures were implemented by the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development to absorb the cut:
2. Reduction of the personnel headcount by only filling critical vacant posts in order to manage the compensation of employees’ budget within the set budget ceiling.
3. Paced down the construction of new courts and prioritised the refurbishment as well as upgrading of existing infrastructure.
4. Constrained expenditure on cost containment items such as catering, travel and subsistence, venue hire, etc. by maintaining a negative growth on its allocation, each year.
5. Strengthened controls on the management of service providers’ performance to seal the expenditure leaks.
6. For high value procurement, allowed the participation of departmental entities and sister departments under the Ministry of Justice and Correctional Services in order to take advantage of economies of scale.
7. Reviewed Annual Performance Plan targets to focus on high impact outcomes.
8. The measures implemented with regards to compensation of employees are short term until the economy in the country stabilizes. These measures will have a negative impact on service delivery where a reduction in frontline services is implemented. Managers are required to put mitigation measures in place to reduce the impact on the public.
9. The Office of the Chief Justice (OCJ) has implemented the following measures to reconcile the recent budget cuts with the key cost drivers of the Department:

* Reprioritization and filling of only critical vacancies; and
* Reprioritization of operational expenditure to provide for virtual operations.

1. (b) These mitigation measures negatively impact on the capacity of the OCJ to resource the Superior Courts in relation to human resources, ICT equipment and replacement of ageing ICT infrastructure which has a detrimental effect on judicial functions (case processing / adjudications); court modernisation and access to justice due to a reduction in the number of circuit courts.