**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**FRIDAY, 26 MAY 2023**

**DUE DATE: 9 JUNE 2023**

**2050. Mr N G Myburgh (DA) to ask the President of the Republic:**

Whether, during the visit of the Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr Lee Hsien Loong, he was able to extract the most important lessons that Singapore, a former British colony, learned along the way towards becoming one of the world’s economic success stories; if not, why not; if so, (a) what were the lessons that were learnt, and (b) how does he plan to implement the lessons in the Republic? NW2319E

**REPLY**

The visit provided South Africa and Singapore with an opportunity to discuss areas of cooperation that are firmly focused on the future. This included cooperation in the fields of digitalisation, communications and technology, water and sanitation, and skills development, among others.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Skills Development that was signed during the official visit on 16 May 2023 aims to enhance skills development in the areas of exchange and training of best practices in digitalisation, leadership and governance, women’s empowerment, youth development and education, science and innovation, port management and trade and economy. More than 1,000 South African officials have been trained under the auspices of the Singapore Development Programme.

The MoU on Information and Communications Technology aims to exchange best practices in ICT, digital technologies and artificial intelligence and robotics. The two countries also agreed to deepen their cooperation in science and innovation.

There is significant potential to further develop the two countries' economic partnership.

This was evident in the business delegation that accompanied Prime Minister Lee, comprising representatives of a number of sectors, including ports, logistics, healthcare and biomedical, food manufacturing and engineering.

While there is much opportunity for cooperation in these and other areas, the country’s respective development paths are not comparable.

South Africa’s colonialism lasted for hundreds of years, followed by the exclusion of the majority of the population, through apartheid, from economic opportunities, education and other forms of capabilities needed for inclusive development. South Africa’s development path, through the establishment of a constitutional democracy, was not necessarily followed by several of the so-called Asian Tigers.

We can draw on each other’s respective capabilities, but we cannot make simplistic comparisons of each country’s historic progress as we work to develop pathways to address systemic poverty and inequality.