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**JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES**

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION NO: 2144**

**DATE OF QUESTION: 02 JUNE 2023**

**DATE OF SUBMISSION: 19 JUNE 2023**

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

Whether, given that he allocated R820 million towards infrastructure development of which R200 million was set aside to be used for the maintenance and/or upkeep of existing courts, and noting that in 2023, courts such as the Thohoyandou High Court in Limpopo still have a backlog of cases dating back to 2011 due to shortages of necessary equipment such as recorders, which often forces the court to resort to using nearby court buildings and in the process delays justice, he has found that his department has been successful in its own promise of rolling out the Court Recording Technology system and modernising the justice system; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details?

**NW2435E**

**REPLY:**

The budget allocated towards the maintenance of courts relates to the physical aspects of maintenance. The modernisation of the Court Recording Technology (CRT) solution is to be funded via other programs of the Department, which includes the Modernisation program and the Integrated Justice System (IJS) program.

The modernisation of the CRT solution will be implemented in an integrated approach. It will cater for the recording of court proceedings, have audio and visual capabilities and will be known as the Court Recording Audio-Visual Solution (CRAVS).

This CRAVS solution will comprise of features that includes, amongst others, a digital courtroom platform to enable face-to-face online court sessions from anywhere within, or outside the country. In this regard, participants only need a camera connected with an internet device to attend the court session virtually and can interact with the Judicial Officer and court through a secure video stream. It will be a very simple solution to use, where each participant can add documents with a secure sharing facility with counsel, clients and opposing parties. It will have real-time transcription software that helps view and maintain live court proceedings and in the case of fines as an example, defendants can instantly resolve fines or set up a payment plan, virtually.

It is envisaged that the 1st phase of the CRAVS solution will be rolled out to 170 courtrooms by 31 March 2024, in line with the Departments 2023/24 APP.

It should also be noted that the CRAVS solution will require a stable underlying ICT infrastructure and network. Accordingly, the Department is also engaging on a project to upgrade both the WAN and LAN networks of all the courts. All courts with copper lines will be upgraded to fibre, and those that already have fibre will have their bandwidth upgraded, if it is found to be insufficient.