**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION: 2263**

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**QUESTION PAPER NO: 23**

**Ms A M Siwisa (EFF) to ask the Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies:**

In light of the continued talks about the 4th industrial revolution and how the level of communication within society is fast depending on technology, what are the details of the (a) collaborations she has undertaken with the Department of Basic Education to introduce technological ways of promoting teaching and learning in schools and (b) schools that will be using technological ways of teaching and learning, with specific reference to township schools and schools in rural areas?NW2549E

 **REPLY:**

(a) The Department of Communications and Digital Technologies has collaborated with the Department of Basic Education to introduce technological ways of promoting teaching and learning in schools. By issuing policy direction to the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) during the Covid-19 pandemic to release temporary spectrum license to telecommunications operators, an obligation was put in place to provide broadband connectivity for 17 months from the date of implementation during the 2021/2022 financial year. A virtual classroom solution was developed at 17 (seventeen) schools where laptops were given to all Grade 12 learners as well as teachers at these schools. The virtual classroom solution had the following items:-

• Wireless microphone;

• Video Camera;

• Smart Board;

• LED Monitor/Display with Webcam;

• 24” Monitor;

• Collaborative Learning Management Software;

• Learning Management Software;

• Video Platform; and,

• Tracking software on learners and teachers’ devices.

Out of these seventeen (17) schools, 5 were in the Eastern Cape, 2 in the North West, 3 in the Northern Cape, 2 in Limpopo, 1 in Kwa-Zulu Natal, 2 in the Free State, and 2 in Mpumalanga.

(b)

1. The seventeen (17) schools which received the virtual classroom solution were either in townships or in rural areas of South Africa.

2. In the 2021/22 financial year, Broadband Infraco (BBI) provided connectivity, including Wi-Fi and Telematics (IT related) training, at Mhlanganisweni Technical High School in the Port St Johns Municipality in the Eastern Cape. The Telematics facility done in partnership with the University of Stellenbosch.

3. As part of the SA Connect Phase 1 programme, the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies provided broadband connectivity (including Wi-Fi) to 596 public schools in South Africa. Also, under the Universal Service and Access Obligation for 1800 MHz and 2100 MHz, 4770 public mainstream schools and 140 special needs schools in South Africa were provided with broadband connectivity by mobile network operators.

4. Services are scheduled to be rolled out to 18 520 public schools nationally, under the SA Connect Phase 2. License Spectrum Service Obligations Stream will be done by the various Telcos, namely Telkom, Vodacom, MTN, Cell C, Liquid Intelligent Technologies, and Rain Networks. ICASA is finalising the terms and conditions of these obligations with the relevant stakeholders to ensure that these obligations are implemented.

Thank You.