

**DEPARTMENT: PUBLIC ENTERPRISES**

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO.: 2595**

**QUESTION:**

**2595. Mr F Essack (DA) to ask the Minister of Public Enterprises:**

In light of the fact that coal miners who export their product to foreign markets have indicated that the poor rail performance by Transnet has negatively impacted their ability to meet overseas demand, what steps has his department taken to address the operational challenges at Eskom which have a negative impact on the export of coal? **NW3111E**

**REPLY:**

**According to the information received from Transnet**

Transnet Freight Rail (TFR) has ramped up maintenance on the North Corridor to daily maintenance (with up to 26 planned maintenance occupations daily). Major maintenance activities were conducted during the annual shutdown that took place in July this year. Given the increased focus on maintenance on the corridor, TFR lifted 16 temporary speed restrictions (TSR) on the main line; 2 prior to the annual shutdown and 14 during the annual shut. Some 36km of rail and 20 000 sleepers were replaced during the shutdown to improve the reliability of the network and reduce the probability of derailments.

A significant amount of work has been undertaken internally to improve procurement timeframes for key contracts that have been the significant cause for delays in the past.

The finalization of major bulk materials and on-track machine contracts (allowing Transnet to assess and restore the line) has led to faster and more efficient resolution of historical maintenance and new maintenance issues as they arise.

Transnet will shortly commence with a process to acquire new locomotives to address the shortage of rolling stock and improve volumes and associated revenue for the business. The company and CRRC E-Loco (Pty) Ltd (“E-loco”) have reached an in-principal agreement towards the resolution of all current legal disputes between the two companies. This will allow TFR to access spare parts and components needed to bring back to service 53 Class 20E and 67 Class 21E locomotives, which have been standing idle as a result of the inability to access the required spares and components. Furthermore, this agreement enables TFR to continue procuring new locomotives from E-Loco.

To curb cable theft, which reached 1560km in 21/22, TFR is a member of the recently established Essential Infrastructure Task Unit by the Police Commissioner within all provinces. Freight Rail also chairs the Infrastructure Crime Forum (ICF) which is a forum that enables collaboration with other SOCs, and other industries impacted by theft of ferrous and non-ferrous metals. In addition, TFR has established multidisciplinary joint operation initiatives with law enforcement agencies (SAPS) to address the rising crime.

Transnet security officers have been granted peace officer status. As such, they will be entitled to; search premises, facilities, and persons; effect arrests; complete dockets to ensure suspects are correctly charged; assist with basic investigations; assist with prosecutions and act as visible deterrents in areas of responsibility. This initiative will lead to an improved security response and increased law enforcement to protect the economically essential railway infrastructure and equipment.

TFR has also established customer partnerships where Coal Customers have provided 89 additional Task teams and 35 Drones for the coal line. The security initiatives have resulted in a decrease in security incidents on the export coal line.