**2917.     Rev K R J Meshoe (ACDP) to ask the Minister of Labour:**

Whether the Government has any plans to reduce damage caused by frequent strikes, which according to her department are harming the economy and the labour force and in view of her department’s latest report on industrial action in which it is stated that the labour economy lost approximately R161 million through work stoppages in 2016, which represents an increase from R116 million in 2015; if not, why not; if so, what plans? ( NW3231E)

**The Minister of Labour replied:**

1. In terms of section 23 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, every worker has the right to strike. The right to strike is regulated by the Labour Relations Act which sets out the procedures for orderly strike action as well as limitations on the right to strike. Therefore any steps taken by Government in relation to strike action must be cognisant of the constitutional and legal framework surrounding strikes.
2. In February 2017, after lengthy engagement in the National Economic Development and Labour Advisory Council (NEDLAC), Government, organised business, organised labour and the community constituency signed an agreement on labour market stability and wage inequality. One of the elements of the agreement is an Accord on Collective Bargaining and Industrial Action in which all social partners commit to taking steps to prevent violence, intimidation and damage to property and to improve the capacity of the social partners and other agencies to resolve disputes peacefully and expeditiously.
3. Another outcome of the NEDLAC engagements has been a number of proposed amendments to the Labour Relations Act. One of these amendments is a provision for advisory arbitration to endeavour to resolve strikes or lockouts that are intractable or may cause a local or national crisis. Once the amendments to the Labour Relations Act are promulgated, Government together with the Commission for Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) will implement them to contribute to greater labour market stability.
4. Already the Commission for Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration is implementing a CCMA-specific dispute and strike prevention programme and is already bearing the desired results.

END