###### National Assembly

###### Question Number: 297

**297. Mr M S F de Freitas (DA) to ask the Minister of Transport:**

(1) With regard to the N4 Wild Coast development project by the SA National Roads Agency (Sanral), why has Sanral continued to proceed with contracting before a legitimate application for judicial review against the environmental authorisation has been settled in court;

(2) in view of the promise by a certain person (name and details furnished) to the local residents that the specified person would address their objections, (a) how has the person addressed and communicated the response to the local community, (b) what was the reaction by the local communities in this regard and (c) at what stage are public consultations with the local communities at present? NW319E

**REPLY:**

1. The project, N2 Wild Coast Toll Road, has been declared as a Strategic Infrastructure Project (SIP) by the Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission (PICC) and has been approved for implementation. The project has the support of the Eastern Cape Provincial Government, both the District and Local Municipalities through whose territory the route alignment traverses, the Traditional Leadership (Kings and Chiefs), Business Chambers, Communities and other stakeholders. As with other projects, there will always be some interested and affected parties that are against the project. The project enjoys overwhelming support in the Eastern Cape Province in general, and the Wild Coast in particular. The Record of Decision (ROD) was issued by the Department of Environmental Affairs in 2010 and has been implemented since that time on many projects along the N2 Wild Coast corridor. The ROD was appealed in 2010 but authorization was upheld by the Minister of Environmental Affairs. It is therefore still valid today. The matter that could be destined for court proceedings is a belated review application, launched in 2012, that seeks to question the validity of the ROD and desirability of the project. This matter is subject to legal processes and both the Department of Environmental Affairs and the Department of Transport along with SANRAL will do everything in their power to defend this very important project for the South African and Eastern Cape economies, and for the people of the Wild coast area.
2. (a) Numerous meetings were held with communities and specific responses were made in writing. The written responses to issues raised by the various communities were sent through the former Mayor of Mbizana Local Municipality to be shared with the various communities.
3. When SANRAL had engaged with the communities they indicated that what SANRAL indicated would be done during the implementation of the project was not what they were told. This is with specific reference to what was said by the AmaDiba Crisis Committee (ACC), who insisted that the road was to be constructed to facilitate dune mining along the Wild Coast. SANRAL has continuously rejected this claim, demonstrating the logic and purpose of this critical section of the N2 corridor. Once informed of the correct facts, communities pledged their support for the project on condition that SANRAL responded in writing to the issues that they raised. This was done via the office of the Mbizana Mayor. The communities in question, i.e the Mdatya and Sigidi communities subsequently withdrew their objection to the project.
4. Consultations in the form of stakeholder engagement sessions are ongoing with the local communities with the last ones held on the 24th and 25th January 2018 at the Wild Coast Sun in the Mbizana Municipality. Invitations were extended to the OR Tambo and Alftrd Nzo District Municipalities as well as all the local municipalities in those districts. Traditional Leaders and Business Chambers were also invited. All these stakeholders were represented in the sessions. These stakeholder engagement sessions are planned for every quarter of the year.