**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 3215**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER [No 33-2022 SIXTH PARLIAMENT]
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**3215. Prof C T Msimang (IFP) to ask the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform**

**and Rural Development:**

1. What (a) steps is her department taking to challenge the reported ban by Botswana and Namibia of the import of produce from the Republic, mainly vegetables and certain fruits and (b) has she found would be the impact of the ban on the Republic’s farmers and consumers.

(2) whether she is in communication with her Namibian and Botswana counterparts in this regard; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details? **NW3938E**

**THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT:**

(1) (a) The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) undertook consultations with the relevant industries and the Department of Trade Industry and Competition (DTIC) as the lead Department on trade policy matters. The engagements resolved that the trade challenge should be addressed through a bilateral Ministerial meeting with the affected countries. DALRRD is implementing this resolution. The Director General wrote to his counterparts requesting urgent bilateral engagements on the matter. The outcome of the engagements will be shared with organised industry.

1. The impact of such closures is lost market opportunities for the industry and loss of revenue to the State. This also undermines the efforts of free trade as contemplated in the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA). Furthermore, consumers of the affected products in these countries are more likely to experience an increase in prices of these commodities due to shortages/supply constraints.

According to the 2nd Quarter Agricultural Economic Review, vegetable prices registered a marked decrease, and this could be directly attributed to the short effects of the import bans. Price depression likely occurred as producers redirected, (as a short-term measure) these export consignments into the domestic market.

The current import ban includes tomatoes, carrots, beetroots, potatoes, cabbage, lettuce, garlic, onions, ginger, turmeric, chili peppers, butternut, watermelons, sweet peppers, green corn, and fresh herbs. Over the past 5 years, 98% of vegetables in Botswana originated from South Africa.

 (2) No. The Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development has not yet communicated with her counterparts in Botswana and Namibia. She is awaiting the outcome of the meetings of the Director General with his counterparts in Botswana and Namibia.