**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 3441**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER [No 37-2022 SIXTH PARLIAMENT] DATE OF PUBLICATION: 30 SEPTEMBER 2022**

**3441. Mr N S Matiase (EFF) to ask the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development:**

Whether there has been any progress on the process of appointing a Master Data Specialist, who should have been appointed by the end of September 2020; if not, why not; if so, what progress has been made in this regard? **NW4246E**

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

Yes. The Office of the Special Master had consulted with the Minister and Director General of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) (DG) and obtained concurrence from Executive Management. The Court granted the Office of the Special Master permission to fill the two additional posts, but the filling of the posts is subject to the job evaluation process.

A job description was developed for the post by benchmarking against similar posts with the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME). The benchmark job evaluation process for the post of Master Data Specialist was conducted for similar posts in the defunct departments (DAFF and DRDLR) and within the DPME and the job evaluation (JE) results for both posts were salary level (SL) 13 that were approved by the Minister on 11 May 2021. However, the processes for the development of the job descriptions and the JE benchmarking took longer than anticipated and the Special Master requested that filling the position not be continued. The Special Master was seeking alternative solutions in reconfiguring the roles and the budget repurposing to rather appoint graduates intended for the research roles, and this was envisaged that post-doctoral and or post-graduate degree holders in the Humanities field will be appointed as field research leaders while the auxiliary staff will be first and honours degree holders in Geography / Survey / Agriculture/ History/ Business Administration / Economics, etc. These disciplines bear direct relevance to using innovative technological tools to build evidence and embed sustainable livelihoods in land claims resolutions. The field research leaders will be expected to participate in delivering capacity development and training workshops with the Special Master and his core staff to develop the capabilities of existing departmental staff working on labour tenant claims resolution. The Special Master was advised to seek approval from the Minister to reconfigure the roles, instead of the two approved positions, namely 1 X Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist and 1 X Master Data Specialist.

To institutionalise the Office of the Special Master within DALRRRD, special focus will be given in the Fit-for-Purpose Project to restructure and repurpose current posts to support the Office of the Special Master as follows:

* Permanent establishment of a national unit with a provincial footprint (provincial and district level) that will address the labour tenant functions;
* Mapping of business process for labour tenants;
* Development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs); and
* Determine capacity requirements and create post establishments to address the need.

DALRRD is therefore, in the process to fill the following positions allocated to the Office of the Special Master:

* 1 x Systems and Operations Manager post filled.
* 1 x Programme Administrator and Office Manager post filled.
* 1 x Corporate Affairs and Stakeholder Manager post filled.
* 1 x Office Assistant post filled.
* 1 x National Programme Manager post. Post advertised and the closing date for the advertisement was 20221014. Filling of the post is anticipated by 28 February 2023.
* 1 x Programme Coordinator. Seconded from the DALRRD.
* 1 x Senior Administrative Officer post. Filling of the post through the Recruitment and Selection or Transfer Processes and filling of the post is anticipated by 28 February 2023.
* 1 x Messenger post. Filling of the post through the Recruitment and Selection or Transfer Processes and filling of the post is anticipated by 28 February 2023.