**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 3512**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER [No 37-2022 SIXTH PARLIAMENT]
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**3512. Mr N P Masipa (DA) to ask the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development:**

In light of the fact that farmers in general are faced with poor roads infrastructures due to lack of local government support, resulting in higher vehicle maintenance and other inflationary costs, what collaborative steps has she taken to address the problems relating to the roads infrastructure maintenance with other Ministers? **NW4325E**

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

In line with Pillar 2 of the Agriculture and Agro-Processing Master Plan (AAMP), which prioritizes the provision of enabling infrastructure to support and grow the Agriculture sector, earlier this year the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development formally communicated with major agricultural organisations and Agribusiness from around the country, requesting them to submit details of rural roads requiring repairs, rehabilitation and surface upgrading. In response the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) received several lists of critically challenged rural roads that are affecting the efficient movement of agricultural produce in the country. These lists allowed DALRRD to map a status profile per Province and District municipality of the critical roads that require resurfacing and rehabilitation.

On analysis of the data and mapping it was found that the majority of the roads requiring attention are national, provincial and regional/municipal roads which are the mandate of the Department of Transport. The Minister of Transport has pronounced that his department will be attending to these. DALRRD will continue to work with other national sector departments and stakeholders to ensure that this work is completed with the urgency it requires.

Further, DALRRD is coordinating engagements between Agricultural Organisations and Agribusiness, sector departments and government stakeholders, in an effort to create a legislative provision for non-governmental organizations to render road rehabilitation services in partnership with rural municipalities. Commercial sector farmers have expressed their willingness, capacity and recourses to fix and maintain municipal roads that affect their businesses. Legislation, however, prevents them from doing so, as municipal roads are public responsibility. The DALRRD is coordinating a process with the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) and the Agricultural Business Chamber to identify roads that fall within this category and create a legislative framework for private farmers in partnership with local municipalities to undertake road repair and maintenance. Official correspondence has been sent to COGTA, Agriculture Chamber of Business and AgriSA in pursuance of this.

Finally, in line with Pillar 2 of the Agriculture and Agro-Processing Master Plan (AAMP), The Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development has directed DALRRD to commence with a Rural Roads Rehabilitation Program that will prioritise farm access roads to land reform farms, village access roads in communal areas and access roads to Farmer Production Support Units (FPSU) that support community based agriculture in rural areas. This program aims to start implementation in partnership with other stakeholders within the current financial year.