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**MINISTRY OF TOURISM**

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY:**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY:**

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**Ms H S Winkler (DA) to ask the Minister of Tourism:**

What (a) steps has SA Tourism taken to engage airlines with regard to the increase in the costs of flying in the Republic and (b) are the prospects of introducing new airlines in the domestic market in the near future? NW50E

**REPLY:**

1. I have been informed that SA Tourism has engaged the Airlines Association of Southern Africa (AASA), which is the leading representative airline organisation within Southern Africa.

AASA works together with leaders of the aviation industry and senior public and government officials on policy, regulatory, planning, operational, safety, security and financial matters affecting the overall profitability of the airlines and their continued sustainability.

The purpose of the engagement was to explore possible collaborations on knowledge sharing.

There has also been improved engagement opportunities with international airlines through the various Air Access committees i.e., Cape Town Air Access, Durban Direct Air Access and Gauteng Air Access where the teams formulate possible incentive programmes for reducing operational costs.

Airline pricing is complicated, and airlines are doing their best to offer the best fare. The reality is that operating costs have substantially increased over the past 12 months due to the cost of jet fuel, amongst other factors.

Other costs have increased due to exchange rates of the Rand versus stronger currencies and airlines maintain aircraft leases and agreements with external suppliers.

1. SA Tourism forms part of the Air Access structures i.e., Cape Town Air Access, Durban Direct Air Access and Gauteng Air Access.

These structures play a key role of lobbying and advocacy for airlines to consider expanding their routes across key local destinations and to add frequencies on existing routes.

The role extends to working with airlines to consider special offers as part of the domestic tourism promotion activities they conduct.

The decision to introduce new airlines lies with airlines directly, based on economic factors and available slots which are issued by the Department of Transport.