**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO: 603**

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**Ms T Bodlani (DA) to ask the Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies:**

Whether, with reference to priority two in her performance agreement with the President of the Republic, Mr M C Ramaphosa, she is on track to complete the specified target by the set date; if not, why not; if so, (a) by what percentage has her department reduced unemployment, (b) what total number of jobs has her department created, especially for the youth, (c) what economic growth has her department been able to achieve and (d) what growth in levels of investment has her department achieved?

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**REPLY:**

The Department is finalising a research study that will serve as the basis for the Cost to Communication review model and/or plan for the 2022/2023 annual accounting period. The study will provide the required information for the construction of the review model and/or plan, which will be completed at the end of 2023/2024 financial year.

(a) The Department has been focusing on SMME development programmes as well as skills and training development. Through collaborations and partnerships, the department has successfully created a DigiTech Platform which allows various SMMEs within the ICT Sector to digitally showcase their products and services. This initiative was aimed at promoting home-grown technological solutions and innovation. Seventy of the SMMEs were supported to virtually showcase their innovation during the Dubai Expo 2022. To date, the platform hosts about 80 SMMEs.

Employment between 2021 and 2022 in the telecommunications sector increased by 12 255 (46%); in the broadcasting sector it increased by 118 (3.43%). There was, however, a slight decline of 1 571 (8.5%) in the postal sector. The net contribution of these sectors to new employment created was approximately 10 800 jobs. By the end of March 2023, there was a total of 52 640 jobs created.

(b) The Department in partnership with NEMISA has successfully implemented the Cell Phone Repairs Training Programme across the Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal, Northern Cape, North West and Limpopo provinces. The three weeks long hybrid training benefited and registered over 100 SMMEs. Beneficiaries of the programme were given toolkits to kickstart their businesses. Further, the Internet Service Provider (ISP) training by .ZADNA is ongoing and has benefited 1200 SMMEs and non-SMMEs to create access to the ISP market across all 9 provinces including 4 correctional service (Boksburg, Mndansani, Groenpunt and Newcastle). 626 of the beneficiaries were women and 574 were men with the majority being youth.

Mechanisms to measure the impact from the Department’s initiatives in terms jobs as well as impact on the vulnerable groups, however, are being developed and will be captured going forward and reports will be made available.

(c) According to the ICASA State of the ICT Sector Report in South Africa, in 2021 the ICT sector grew by R 243.6-billion in revenue. This was up from R243-billion in 2020. The broadcasting service revenue increased by 2.8% i.e. R 36-billion and the postal service revenue increased by 11.1%, from R 5.6-billion in 2020 to R6.6-billion in 2021. The overall sector increased by 4.3%.

(d) The ICASA State of the ICT Sector Report in South Africa states that the total investment emanating from the telecommunication sector was R 33 970-billion, with mobile communication services totalling R 17 251-billion, followed by infrastructure investment of R 8,5-billion. The fixed (wired) broadband services stands at R 3,9-billion while the rest of investment is on expansion of networks (R1,1 billion), maintenance (R 1,1-billion) and R 78-million on fixed telephone services..

Thank You.