**QUOTE**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO: 645(NW760E)**

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**MS H O HLOPE (EFF) TO ASK THE MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION:**

1. Whether, with reference to the preservation of the manuscripts in Timbuktu, Mali, which was one of the key pillars of former President Thabo Mbeki’s African Renaissance agenda, and the apparent lack of commitment from the Government to preserve the specified ancient manuscripts and leading to them being endangered, why has her department ignored the specified project since 2009;
2. is this an indication of a weakening resolve for the African Renaissance within the current administration; if not, what has the Government done to show its commitment to the rejuvenation of Africa? NW760E

**REPLY:**

1. I will not agree with the assertion that South Africa has ignored the preservation of the manuscripts in Timbuktu, Mali. Following the January 2012 political and security instability in northern Mali which resulted in the Ahmed Baba Institute Library being occupied by islamists/terrorist, causing huge damage to the building, most of the manuscripts were rescued and relocated to a safe place in Bamako, Mali. South Africa under the leadership of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation and the Department of Arts and Culture continues to support the Preservation of the Timbuktu Manuscript in Mali. For example, in 2015, the African Rennaisance and International Cooperation Fund granted an amount of R10 million towards this project.

Further, South Africa has seconded an expert from the Department of Arts and Culture to Bamako, Mali, to assist with the preservation of the manuscripts and assess the conditions underwhich they are stored. Currently, the Department of International Relations and Cooperation and the Department of Arts and Culture are working on renewing the Memorandum of Understanding that regulates this matter following the lapse of the initial one. As soon as this process is completed, the project to refurbish the damaged building will continue, subject to security situation.

1. There is absolutely no truth that the fourth Administration has no resolve to pursue the African Renaissance. For the past seven years, this Administration has played a leading role in pursuance of African renewal through several continental programmes such as the Presidential Infrastructure Championing Initiative (PICI), African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC), ongoing implementation of NEPAD, contribution to peacemaking and peacekeeping on the Continent, etc.

The adoption of the vision of the AU Agenda 2063 and its first 10 Year Implimentation Plan, is now the cornerstone of the African Renaissance.

**UNQUOTE**