**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION NO: 699**

**DATE OF QUESTION: 04 MARCH 2022**

**DATE OF SUBMISSION: 18 MARCH 2022**

**Adv G Breytenbach (DA) to ask the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services:**

In light of the fact that faulty court machinery has been identified as the reason a rape case of a certain person (name furnished), which has been dragging for nearly two years, was postponed yet again in early February in the Parow Regional Court and the reason for the umpteenth postponement was that the stenotype machine was not working, which is a perennial problem in the specified court and others countrywide, what is he and/or his department doing to ensure that proper (a) contracts and (b) maintenance plans for the machinery are in place to ensure optimum utilisation of court time?

**NW837E**

**REPLY:**

The Department regrets the inconvenience caused to all victims of crime, and in particular, to victims of gender-based violence and femicide for further subjecting them to trauma as a result of more postponements. The Department is committed to upholding and respecting the rights of all victims of crime and ensuring that their matters are heard and finalized as soon as possible.

The Supply Chain Management Unit in the Department worked very hard with National Treasury to find the most expedient method of procurement so that we can re-start the service and the maintenance program. A reputable service provider that is approved by the manufacturer of our court recording technology has since been appointed for a period of twelve months to repair and maintain the court recording and sexual offences systems in the courts.

The service provider has already commenced with the processes to repair damaged and faulty equipment by adopting a risk-based approach that starts with courts with highest calls logged and dysfunctional equipment. Stakeholders have also been consulted to identify courts with greatest need and said priority lists have been furnished to the service provider. Site assessments of various courts to diagnose the problem and repair or order parts where necessary are already in motion and in some courts the systems are already in operation.

Court Services’ senior managers are meeting with the service provider on a weekly basis to monitor progress and ensure that we are on track. At the same time, the procurement process for a long-term solution has begun. A bid specifications committee has been appointed and the committee has already drawn up the specifications that will soon go out on tender for a three-year period.

In order to avoid a similar mishap from happening in the future, the Department is strengthening the Contract Management Unit and reviewing all current contracts that are due to expire within a period of eight months to ensure that we can procure on time and thus avoid disruptions and have optimally functional systems.

**END**