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**Memorandum from the Parliamentary Office**

**Minister**

**National Assembly question for written reply: 717**

**Mr L Mphithi (DA) to ask the Minister in The Presidency for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities:**

In view of the fact that her Office has been discouraged on the use of consultants by the Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities due to severe budget cuts that require limited use of consultants, what steps has her Office taken to ensure that all targets and the mandate of her Office are met without the use of consultants? NW837E

**Reply compiled by: ADDG: PSCKM & DDG:STEE**

**Recommended /Not recommended**

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**Advocate MJ Maluleke**

Director-General

Date:

**Supported /Not supported**

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**Prof H Mkhize, MP**

Deputy Minister

Date:

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER: 717**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 05 MARCH 2021**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NUMBER 2021: 06 OF 2021**

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In view of the fact that her Office has been discouraged on the use of consultants by the Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities due to severe budget cuts that require limited use of consultants, what steps has her Office taken to ensure that all targets and the mandate of her Office are met without the use of consultants? NW837E

**REPLY:**

The Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities has regularly indicated its concern with the use of consultants by the department due to budgetary constraints.

It must be emphasised that due to budgetary cuts, especially in the allocation for compensation of employees, it has impacted on the ability of the Department to recruit and hire suitably technically skilled persons to carry out certain specific tasks and activities. Unfortunately the Department has been placed in a situation where it is forced to use short-term, temporary skilled personnel to assist in these areas of work.

One such area is in the development of an evidence-based knowledge portal, which requires high technical skills in conceptualising and developing a model for an electronic platform. Furthermore there is also an element of IT Skills that are needed to develop and undertake the back-end processes of such an electronic platform. These skills are not available within the current personnel in the department. Thus the Department has been working with the University of Johannesburg since 2019 towards this end. However due to the budget reprioritisation process redirecting government spending towards the response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the country, this project was reprioritised for implementation in the 2021/22 financial year.

In order to reduce the use of consultants, the Department has also embarked on collaborative efforts with UN agencies in an effort to increase its capacity on areas that requires technical expertise. Two technical experts have been secured from UNFPA in respect of the development of a comprehensive M&E framework for the Sanitary Dignity programme, and the development of a comprehensive M&E Framework for the National Strategic Plan on Gender Based Violence & Femicide.

It must be noted that in the use of these external technical expertise in these three programmes of the department, there is a level of ongoing skills transfer as well. However in achieving the majority of the targets in the Annual Performance Plan, the Department has been undertaking the work in-house, and meeting the necessary quarterly targets. The Department is therefore on course to meet its targets for the year with the work done by the officials in the department itself.

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**Approved by Minister**

**Ms M Nkoana-Mashabane, MP**

**Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**