

**MINISTRY**

**PUBLIC WORKS**

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**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER: 774 [NW897E]**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO.: 09 of 2019**

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**DATE OF REPLY: 18 APRIL 2019**

**774. Mr D R Ryder (DA) asked the Minister of Public Works:**

(1) (a) What are the details of the inter-departmental forum set up to manage the disposal of the Government’s immovable assets in foreign territories, (b) what is the (i) name and (ii) professional designation of each member of the forum and (c) why has each member been appointed to serve on the forum;

(2) (a) what is the (i) name and (ii) professional designation of the forum’s chairperson and (b) why was the specified person selected to serve as the forum’s chairperson;

(3) (a) which immovable assets is the forum looking at for disposal and (b) where is each asset situated;

(4) whether the forum took a decision regarding the Government’s two properties in Bonn in the Federal Republic of Germany; if so, what are the relevant details?

 **NW897E**

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**The Minister of Public Works**

**REPLY:**

1. (a) In order to deal with the 18 properties identified by the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) as surplus to their needs, the Department of Public Works (DPW) and DIRCO established a joint inter-departmental task team to give effect to the disposal of these properties. Under this joint team five properties in Namibia were disposed. Owing to the subsequent reconsideration of the possible alternate use of the properties, as well as the introduction and development of the Foreign Services Bill, the joint inter-departmental task team did not formally convene. However, in the event that DIRCO takes a decision to dispose of the remaining properties, a new joint team and its membership will have to be reconstituted.
2. In 2009, membership of the forum was as follows
3. and (ii)

 Ms B Africa (Chief Director- Facilities Management DIRCO co-chair)

Mr E Dlamini (Chief Director- Property Portfolio Management - DPW co-chair)

 Mr P Bolink (Director- DIRCO Facilities Management)

 Mr M Phambane (Director- DPW Property Disposals)

 Ms M Dumane (Director- DPW Key Accounts Management)

 Ms M Molotsi (Deputy Director- DPW Property Disposals)

1. At the time these members were employed in the Facilities Management and Disposal units in DIRCO and DPW respectively.
2. (a) (i) and (ii ) The forum was co-chaired by

 Ms B Africa (Chief Director- DIRCO Facilities Management co-chair)

Mr E Dlamini (Chief Director- Property Portfolio Management - DPW co-chair)

(b) The co-chairpersons were the heads of the above-mentioned Facilities Management and Disposals functions within DIRCO and DPW.

1. (a) As mentioned-above, the forum is not operational. DIRCO is currently updating the list of vacant properties abroad with a view to identifying the best way forward on each immovable asset, assisted by DPW.

 (b) DPW is awaiting an updated list from DIRCO.

1. In the early 2000s, DIRCO, which was then known as the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), identified a number of properties in various countries as redundant and a financial burden to the State. At the time, The DFA confirmed 18 properties for disposal in various countries. The 18 properties were made up as follows: 13 properties Namibia; 2 properties in Bonn, Germany; 1 property in Zurich, Switzerland; 1 Madeira, Portugal and 1 parking bay in Paris, France.

In August 2008, the then Minister of Public Works approved the disposal of all the identified redundant foreign properties through public tender. However, as this process was new under the democratic dispensation, the DPW then prioritised the disposal of the 13 Namibian properties as a pilot project.

It was then in 2009, that the Acting Director-General of the Department of Public Works along with his counterpart at the DFA approved the establishment of a Joint Foreign Disposal Committee (JFDC) to facilitate the disposal of all identified foreign properties. In 2010, the sale of the Namibian properties was advertised on public tender. Out of the 13 Namibian properties only 5 properties were disposed of and the remaining 8 properties could not be disposed of, as the bidders failed to raise funds for the purchase.

Since then the DPW and DIRCO have tried to resume the process of disposal of the identified properties located abroad without success. Nonetheless, the Foreign Service Bill Foreign Service Bill (B35B of 2015), was passed by the National Assembly in December 2018. The bill makes provision for the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation to be able to dispose of properties under DIRCO’s custodianship, in consultation with the Minister of Public Works and the Minister of Finance. Once promulgated, we trust that the Act will enable DIRCO to move swiftly to deal with properties that are redundant and a financial burden to the State. DIRCO and DPW will continue to cooperate on matters of disposals and facilities management, with a view to the DPW providing DIRCO with the necessary technical expertise to be able to develop its immovable asset management capabilities.