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Department:
Trade, Industry and Competition
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO. 1809

Ms Z S Abader (MK) to ask the Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition:

1. Considering that the United States Trade Representative launched a section 301 investigation into the Republic in March 2026, a process typically used as a precursor to punitive tariffs and trade sanctions, and given the very real risk such investigation poses to the Republic's continued access to the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which supports thousands of local jobs in key sectors such as the automotive and agriculture sector, what specific steps has his department taken to prevent the Republic from being exposed to (a) possible trade penalties and (b) the potential loss of AGOA benefits;
2. what direct engagements has he had with his United States counterparts to urgently resolve the concerns cited in the specified investigation;
3. how does he justify the Government's continued policy posture and geopolitical positioning, which appears to be placing the trade relationships of the Republic and the livelihoods of its people at risk;
4. whether it is his position that South Africans must accept that ideological posturing has been prioritised over economic survival and job security; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details? [NW2012E]

REPLY:

1. The United States has initiated Section 301 investigations into 60 countries, focusing on their failure to prohibit imports of goods produced with forced labour. The US has



requested consultations with the affected countries, including South Africa. Minister Tau has noted the investigation and is responding to the US request for consultation and has also requested relevant evidence, including the particular goods and countries in question, in order to respond effectively. The Section 301 investigation and AGOA are separate matters, with AGOA being an Act of Congress. As a result, the future of AGOA depends on Congress. It is important to make it clear that South African Constitution and laws prohibit any forced labour in the country.

2. Minister Tau is responding to a letter from the USTR on the Section 301 investigations, indicating that South Africa is ready to engage in consultations with the US on the matter and requesting relevant information in order to prepare for such an engagement. The US will host public hearings on the matter on 28 April – 1 May 2026. South Africa will respond to any issues raised in the public hearing that relate to South Africa.
3. Cabinet has taken a position to continue engagements with the United States and these discussions are conducted under various tracks including on Domestic Issues, Geopolitics, Trade, and Commercial. The United States remains an important trade and investment partner for South Africa, with over 600 companies invested in South Africa and the United States being leading destination for South Africa's value-added manufactured exports. As a result, notwithstanding geopolitical issues, the Trade Track continues in its engagement with the United States.
4. It is important to note that the current trade policy measures applied by the United States are not targeted at South Africa only, but equally to all countries. The measures are not linked to the current issues between the United States and South Africa. The 10% Section 122 tariffs that the US implemented, were applied to all countries. Similarly, the Section 301 investigations are targeting 60 countries including South Africa. As a result, South Africa is not being targeted individually as a country.

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