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Department:
Trade, Industry and Competition
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO. 7344

Mr R W T Chance (DA) to ask the Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition:

- (1) Whether the SA Bureau of Standards (SABS) is currently reviewing the national standards in the regulation of vehicle licence plates; if not, why not; if so, by what date are the new standards expected;
- (2) whether the SABS has been informed of the use of non-compliant manufacturing processes in the licence plate industry; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, (a) what action will the SABS take in this regard and (b) what are the relevant details;
- (3) whether he will launch an independent investigation into allegations of improper relationships between manufacturers and the SABS, including in respect of compliance approvals; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

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REPLY

- (1) The SABS TC 1070 SC01 – Retro-reflection - Number Plates is the technical committee comprised of a diverse stakeholder representation, which includes government departments, regulators, and industry associations. This committee is responsible for the scope of standards development in the Number plate sector, which includes SANS 1116-1; SANS 1116-2; SANS 1116-3; and SANS 1116-4.

The committee has reaffirmed the relevance of the Standards, and there are no amendments or revision projects open for the SANS 1116 series of standards.

(2) (a)&(b)

Previously, a matter relating to the alleged use of non-compliant manufacturing processes in the licence plate industry was brought to the SABS. The SABS has been engaging with the stakeholders raising this concern and has explained its position, which is that the SABS is testing number plates to the SANS standards as listed above - permit holders are audited twice annually.

The Department of Transport, using the National Road Traffic Act (Act No. 93 of 1996), is responsible for enforcement and should deal with manufacturers that do not have permits and who are manufacturing number plates that are not compliant. The SABS will deal with matters that relate to the infringement of the SABS Mark - transgressions by SABS Mark holders are dealt in line with the SABS General Permit Conditions and the Intellectual Property legislation.

(3) The only matters relating to compliance approvals that SABS is aware of relate to the incorrect award of licence plate permits to dealerships. This is a known transgression but is no longer the case - the SABS does not issue permits to motor dealers. We have previously received cases of inconsistent enforcement in the market place but our response has been consistent, we are not a regulator and do not enforce competition, market access or related issues.

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