

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER 324**

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**Mr N Singh (IFP) to ask the Minister of Finance:**

- (1) (a) What (i) has caused the delay in the disbandment of the anti-smuggling unit (AST) of the SA Revenue Service (SARS) (details furnished), (ii) final date has been set for its closure and (iii) will happen to the AST officers who do not join the Customs Border Control Unit (CBCU) and (b) where will these AST officers be redeployed;
- (2) whether they will be provided with training to assist them in their redeployment elsewhere within SARS?

NW314E

**REPLY:**

- (1) (a) (i) There was no delay in the disbandment of the Anti-Smuggling Teams (AST). The Anti-Smuggling Teams were phased out over a period of time following the introduction of the Customs Border Control Unit (CBCU) in 2008 into which most AST members were incorporated, dependent on them completing CBCU training and being deployed. All existing Anti-Smuggling operations ceased during the week ending 11<sup>th</sup> December 2009. The final AST members to be incorporated into the CBCU will occur by mid March 2010 when they commence their training.
  - (ii) All existing Anti-Smuggling operations ceased during the week ending 11<sup>th</sup> December 2009.
  - (iii) Those officers that elected not to accept offers to join the Customs Border Control Unit (CBCU) have as an interim measure been deployed into critical and essential operational areas. For example, many former AST officers are currently seconded to the various branches for year-end Revenue Campaign initiatives and activities. These secondments were done in terms of the existing HR Secondment policy.

- (b) Permanent placement will take place on an individual basis to ensure “goodness of fit” between each individual and the new position. Where skills and competency gaps are identified between current and future roles and jobs, staff will be re-skilled and retrained.
- (2) As noted above, individual skills will be assessed in the process of redeployment and, where possible, staff will be placed in roles for which they have the requisite skills. Where additional skills and competencies are required, staff will be re-skilled and retrained to address the gaps and to meet the requirements of the new jobs.