

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**QUESTION No.3302 - 2012****FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

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“Mr P Ntshiqela (Cope) to ask the Minister of Arts and Culture”

What assessment has he made of the implications for his department of the Census 2011 statistics indicating that the use of the English language is increasing at the expense of the other 10 official languages?

NW4189E

REPLY:

1. Statistics indicating increase in the use of the English language confirm common perceptions about the language. Its choice as the language of wider communication indicates what individual and group users value. Within the framework of human rights, especially in matters of cultural practice and language, no one can prescribe values without infringing upon others' rights to choice. Be that as it may, the Minister of Arts and Culture's assessment of the situation allowed him to judge that, within his competency and jurisdiction, he could speed up the language legislation to regulate the use of all 11 official languages in national government departments, public entities and enterprises. On 2 October 2012, the President of South Africa assented to the Language Act and published it in the Government Gazette No 35742. He is yet to declare when it comes into operation.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Arts and Culture is finalizing the Regulations to guide the national departments, public entities and enterprises in crafting their language policies. He has also submitted to Cabinet the South African Languages Practitioners' Council Bill. Cabinet approved this Bill on 17 July 2012. If it is enacted, the profession of language practitioners will be regulated thus protected so that government is assured that all 11 official languages receive equitable attention.