**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 109**

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**109. Mr S L Ngcobo (IFP) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

Whether, in view of the need for adjustment in education due to the demands of the fourth industrial revolution, she intends to revive the laptop initiative which was discussed for a long period in the labour relations council and was later abandoned just before implementation; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details? NW1066E

**RESPONSE**

1. The Teacher Laptop Initiative was part of a strategy to take forward the objective of improving Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in teaching and learning.  After its announcement in 2009, the initiative was widely hailed as one of the critical steps towards the improvement of the quality of education. The initiative’s aim was to ensure that every teacher owns and uses a laptop, by providing them with a monthly allowance which will contribute to the purchase costs as well as the costs of connectivity.
2. Due to a number of challenges the Department did not launch this project.
3. STATE OF THE NATIONS ADDRESS (SONA) INJUNCTIONS

Based on the 2019 SONA injunctions, the DBE plans to provide each learner and teacher with an ICT device with access to digitised Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM).

* 1. A comprehensive ICT plan has been developed to provide a framework for an affordable and sustainable implementation of ICTs in education. The plan will be implemented in three phases, commencing with Phase 1 that will target multi-grade, multiphase, farm and selected rural schools (2020-2021). The Second Phase will target quintile 1 to 3 schools (2022-2023), and Phase 3 will target quintile 4 and 5 schools (2024). All Special schools will be accommodated in all phases according to the type of disability.
  2. The DBE will work with other government departments, the private sector and social partners in the deployment of ICTs, and will drive a sector-wide campaign to maximise the benefit of e-Learning at all schools in the country.

1. FOCUS AREAS

Four areas have been identified from the e-Education White Paper (2004) as follows:

* 1. Digital content resource development (digitisation)

The DBE will invest in digital content development to ensure that high quality digital resources are available free of charge offline and online via the DBE Cloud, Thutong and other platforms. The basic education sector aims for a balance between ‘state-owned’ content resources, open education resources (OERs) and publisher-created (proprietary) content resources. The Department will continue with its initiative of digitising state-owned content resources.

* 1. ICT professional development for management, teaching and learning integration

The introduction of ICT in the education sector necessitates the professional development of all teachers, managers and educator support staff in the Provinces. This means the provision of appropriate training for teachers and managers before they attempt to introduce the use of ICT in the classrooms. The training of teachers will be guided by the Professional Development Framework for Digital Learning.

* 1. ICT infrastructure

The DBE plans to provide each learner and teacher with an ICT device to enhance teaching and learning. It should be noted that ICT infrastructure is fundamental to the implementation of e-Education and offers opportunities to access learning, redress inequalities and improve the quality of teaching and learning.

* 1. School connectivity

The Departments of Basic Education and Communications have developed a connectivity plan for schools. The plan seeks to provide cost-effective, secure and efficient connectivity that will advance the quality of teaching and learning in schools, specifically ensuring access to quality education.