**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 111**

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**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 01/2019**

**111. Ms N I Tarabella Marchesi (DA) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

(1) Whether, with reference to her reply to question 3619 on 4 December 2018, she will furnish Ms N I Tarabella Marchesi with a copy of the report of her department’s investigation into an alleged compromise of the Economics question papers for the 2018 National Senior Certificate examinations;

(2) whether any further investigations into the matter have been launched since her reply to question 3619 on 4 December 2018; if so, (a) on what date was the further investigation (i) launched and (ii) completed, (b) what are the (i) names and (ii) professional designations of each investigating officer and (c) what are the details of the outcome of the further investigation? NW116E

**RESPONSE**

1. The investigation has been concluded and a detailed report on the findings of the investigation is attached as (**Annexure A)**
2. The reply to the Parliamentary question 3619, submitted on 4 December 2018 was a preliminary report which focussed on the support programme broadcast on Ukhozi FM.
3. The further investigation (i) commenced on 11 December 2018 and was (ii) completed on 27 December 2018.
4. The investigation was headed by the Director responsible for Public Examinations at the Department of Basic Education, and she was supported by a team of subject specialists, the DBE Data Manager, the DBE Irregularities Manager and the DBE Question Paper Manager. The details of the team are included as (**Annexure B).**
5. The outcome of the further investigation is as follows:

* The credibility of the Economics Paper 1 and Paper 2, was not compromised given that learners were not given direct questions that appeared in the examination and were not asked to focus on particular questions. Hence, there was no unfair advantage to any group of candidates
* Given the focus of the teaching and testing of Economics, which in the main provides learners with a pool of questions, it is possible for experienced teachers to predict some of the questions that may appear in the question paper, particularly the essays.
* An analysis of learner performances does not show any anomalous trends. There is no significant improvement compared to 2017 and in some cases performance is actually lower.
  + - * It would appearthat Economics has taken on an approach of providing learners with a pool of questions and this starts with the Examination Guideline that is based on a series of questions. In the same vein, all support programmes are dominated by questions. It would also appear that based on a historical analysis of the previous question papers, teachers and subject advisors are able to predict to some degree which questions will appear in the paper. Examination predictability is a phenomenon of most examinations and the DBE is actively working towards minimising examination predictability.