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**1235.  Mr S L Ngcobo (IFP) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

(1)       Whether her department is taking any initiatives to address structural digital inequalities in e-learning in primary schools; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;

(2)       whether, in view of the much-feared third wave of COVID-19 which might dawn on the Republic soon, with anticipated learning losses for all learners, and given that due to the digital divide between fee-paying and non-fee paying schools more losses are anticipated for learners in non-fee paying schools, her department has a long-term sustainable solution to fight the digital divide for primary school learners who are disadvantaged; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

**Response**

1) The Department of Basic Education has developed a comprehensive plan to provide learners and teachers with digitised content as well as Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSMs). Different types of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) gadgets will be provided to learners in the Primary as well as Secondary schools, based on the type of teaching and learning resources that will be installed on these devices.  The department has also developed the Remote Learning Strategy that ensures education continuity during the period imposed by the pandemic.  This includes the Tswelopelo platform for primary school learners, and the zero-rating of education sites.

(2) The Department of Basic Education is working with State Information Technology Agency  (SITA) and National Treasury to put all the necessary procurement processes in place to provide learners and teachers with ICT devices.  The DBE has partnered with the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies to zero-rate over 300 education sites, that provide digital and video content to all learners.  Furthermore, the DBE has developed a comprehensive recovery plan for teaching and learning that includes broadcast through TV OVHD Channel; use of both public and community radio broadcast; and printed materials have been made available and are collected at schools by parents and caregivers to complement all the other efforts by the department.