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| MEMORANDUM FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY OFFICE |

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 1472**

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**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO 25 OF 2020**

**Mr B S Madlingozi (EFF) to ask the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology:**

In light of the recent judgment of the Supreme Court of Appeal reinstating Afrikaans as a language of instruction at the University of South Africa, what are the details of engagements that he has had with universities to ensure that language does not continue to be used as a tool of exclusion for many university students?

**NW1843E**

**REPLY:**

The Department is aware of the recent judgement by the Supreme Court of Appeal reinstating Afrikaans as the medium of instruction at the University of South Africa, alongside the current medium of instruction, which is English. The Department has been closely following many other judgements, notably by the Constitutional Court, rightfully upholding decisions by university Councils at a number of universities, to move away from the use of Afrikaans as a barrier of access to non-Afrikaans language speakers. The Department has welcomed these decisions as they advance government’s transformation agenda and are part of the national effort to create inclusive institutional cultures at institutions of higher learning.

The Department’s approach to languages at universities is a systemic one and it does not convene a meeting with universities every time there is a court judgement in favour of, or setting aside, a particular university Council’s decision on their language plan or strategy. The Department has a generic language policy framework that serves to guide institutional language policies and plans.

The language policy framework has recently been revised and strengthens the previous higher education language policy framework of 2002. At the core of this policy is the affirmation of all official languages as spelled out in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Values of inclusivity, parity of esteem between all our languages and the promotion of multilingualism are central to this policy framework and it is encouraging that a number of universities are already moving in this direction. As indicated previously on a number of occasions, in the post 1994 South Africa, none of our higher education institutions, whether public or private, will exclude any South African on the basis of language as such practices belong to the past.