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| MEMORANDUM FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY OFFICE |

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 1673**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 12/05/2023**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO 16 OF 2023**

**Ms N I Tarabella Marchesi (DA) to ask the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation:**

(1) What number of learners with Mathematics, Natural Science and Technology (a) enter and study science-related degrees in the institutions of higher learning, (b) eventually complete their degrees and (c) further their studies up to the level of a (i) Master’s degree and (ii) Doctorate;

(2) what amount did his department spend on the science, innovation and technology-related degrees in the 2022 academic year?

**NW1914E**

**REPLY:**

1. (a)The tracking of data of learners who enter higher education (public and private institutions) with Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Technology (STM) has not been actioned. The Department mostly tracks subject neutral data of students that fall within the public university sector. For instance, tracking of studies related to Engineering between 2019 to 2021 shows there has been a decline in the number of engineering graduates. Universities reported 13 714 graduates in 2019, 12 652 in 2020 and 12 605 in 2021. The main cause of the decline may be linked to the difficulties experienced in 2020 regarding the COVID-19 Pandemic when students could not readily access laboratories.
2. The Table (a) below shows the number of first-time entering undergraduate enrolment in SET across 26 public universities in the republic over a year period 2017 – 2021, followed by table(b) which consist of total undergraduate graduates in SET and lastly table(c) indicate masters and doctoral total enrolment in SET.

***Table a***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Qualification Type** | **Year** |
| **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** |
| FTE Undergraduate | 57738 | 58182 | 55350 | 57418 | 50742 |

***Table b***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Qualification Type** | **Year** |
| **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** |
| Total Undergraduate | 45477 | 48392 | 48088 | 48305 | 50600 |

***Table c***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Qualification Type** | **Year** |
| **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** |
| Doctoral | 11103 | 11678 | 12302 | 11662 | 12179 |
| Masters | 28512 | 29454 | 29766 | 29461 | 29614 |

1. The Department’s expenditure is through a block grant subsidy transferred to the universities. The subsidy generated from Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) qualifications is based on teaching input units linked to enrolment targets. For the 2023 academic year, using 2021 audited HEMIS data, the teaching input subsidy generated from STEM qualifications amounts to approximately R12,5 billion.