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| MEMORANDUM FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY OFFICE |

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 1753**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 31/07/2020**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO 29 OF 2020**

**Prof B Bozzoli (DA) to ask the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology:**

(a) How does the SA Qualifications Authority (SAQA) intend to utilise the R1,2 million which has been reallocated towards Covid-19 expenditure and (b) what exact effect will the specified reallocation of funding have on SAQA’s other expenses?

 **NW2143E**

**REPLY:**

(a)   The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) is using the reallocated budget to reduce the spread of COVID-19 when employees are at the office.  Management has earmarked and reprioritised R1.2 million for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as masks, gloves, sanitisers and disinfectants for 197 SAQA employees, and to procure cleaning equipment and consumables, as well as deep cleaning services, as and when necessary after risk assessments.

(b)  SAQA is facing dire financial challenges as a result of the pandemic lockdown measures in that no evaluation of foreign qualifications or verifications of qualifications for appointments are being requested, which normally provides significant revenue for SAQA annually. SAQA is unable to raise its originally budgeted income through these revenue generating streams during the lockdown.

The reallocation of funding added to the financial challenges that SAQA is already facing. SAQA, in consultation with the Department, considered the following cost-cutting measures:

* vacant positions and non-critical positions will not be filled in the immediate future;
* savings on travel/accommodation and subsistence items as a result of the lockdown;
* advertisements;
* consultancy fees; and
* conference costs.

SAQA’s revised budget is reflecting a deficit of approximately R37 million, even after effecting intensive cost-cutting measures in preparing its revised budgeted expenditure.