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| MEMORANDUM FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY OFFICE |

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 2489**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 19/11/2021**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO 27 OF 2021**

**Mr S L Ngcobo (IFP) to ask the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation:**

(1) How does a budget increase from R44,7 billion to R56,8 billion that was allocated by the Minister of Finance in his recent Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement on 11 November 2021 sufficiently provide for the needs of his department in the current financial year;

(2) in light of the lack of a comprehensive student financial aid system in the Republic, how does a budget allocation of R158,8 billion allocated over the 2022 Medium-Term Expenditure Framework address the issues affecting higher education student funding with regard to (a) student debts and (b) the National Student Financial Aid Scheme funding?

**NW2909E**

**REPLY:**

1. The allocation over the Medium-Term will continue to assist the Department to execute its mandate in the current economic constraints. However, the allocation is not sufficient to provide for all the needs of the Department.

2. A shortfall on the NSFAS budget is still anticipated for the 2022/23 financial year and engagement is ongoing within the government budget processes in relation to this matter. Student debt for qualifying NSFAS students is being addressed in part through a process between NSFAS and institutions following a 2019 allocation from the Department to NSFAS for this purpose. I have also appointed a Ministerial Task Team to look at the long-term issues relating to a new financial aid policy for the future.