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| MEMORANDUM FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY OFFICE |

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 3355**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 23/09/2022**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO 36 OF 2022**

 **Mr S Tambo (EFF) to ask the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation:**

(a) What action has been taken to resolve the accommodation allowance crisis after the protests at the University of Limpopo and (b) how will this unfortunate event of accommodation allowances not being paid because of administrative processes and delays be avoided in future?

**NW4160E**

**REPLY:**

1. In relation to the University of Limpopo, NSFAS took a decision to deploy Senior Officials to attend to the conflict between the University of Limpopo, landlords and the students. At a meeting attended by these stakeholders and NSFAS in Polokwane on 22 September 2022, an agreement was reached on how to proceed. This agreement will be submitted for consideration and approval by the Board and the Minister. It should be noted that NSFAS only pays allowances upon receipt of claims on behalf of qualifying students by the University. However, the University has been busy with a verification exercise in order to comply with the Norms and Standards of DHET and the funding guidelines by NSFAS. The verification exercise took longer than expected and was met with some resistance from some of the landlords and students, especially the decision by NSFAS that off-campus allowances be paid directly into the landlords’ bank accounts. The agreement reached at the meeting was that for the rest of the 2022 academic year, off-campus allowances should be paid to the students who will settle their rental obligations with the landlords, as has been the case to date. The verification exercise should be continued until 2023 to allow landlords to make the necessary improvements to their properties so as to eventually comply with the minimum standards set by DHET. The meeting recommended that a fixed allowance of R1 820 be paid to all qualifying students until the verification exercise is concluded.
2. As part of the student-centred model NSFAS took the decision to improve the administration of student accommodation. This will include accreditation of accommodation, grading and assigning costs to the different grades, linking students to accommodation, and ultimately paying accommodation providers directly. Part of the model will include increased capacity for accommodation. NSFAS plans, as of 2023, take over the accreditation of student accommodation. A system will be available for all potential housing suppliers to enlist their properties so that students can have a wider choice of accommodation. NSFAS will use this platform to expedite the allocation of suitable student accommodation and ensure that landlords are paid a fair value according to the accommodation provided directly.