**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO 3365**

**"3364. Prof. B Bozzoli (DA) to ask the Minister of Science and Technology:**

**(1) (a) What programmes of the National Research Foundation's (NRF's) budget will benefit from its decision to cut funding to over 2 000 rated researchers by 90% from 1 January 2018, (b) what amount will be saved, and (c) what precisely will the savings be used for;**

**(2) were other areas of possible savings considered so as to reduce the shock effect of the 90% decrease; if not why not; if so, (a) what are the details, and (b) why were these areas not included in the NRF's savings plan,**

**(3) has the NRF done a cost-benefit analysis of what will be lost as a result of the 90% decrease, in terms of (a) student education and (b) research outputs; if not, in each case, why not, if so, what were the findings in each case?**

**NW3757E**

**REPLY**

1. The number of A and B rated researchers is 831 and not 2 000. The restructuring of the Incentive Funding for Rated Researchers (IFRR) instrument will benefit emerging and early career researchers as well as established researchers through the following instruments, viz., (i) Competitive programme for Rated Researchers (CPRR); (ii) Competitive Support for Unrated Researchers (CSUR); and (iii) Thuthuka.

Based on the current MTEF budget, it is estimated the approximately R30 million per annum will be re-directed and used to supplement the above funding instruments.

2. Yes, all areas of possible savings were considered in terms of the NRF's operational and financial sustainability plans. However, only the IFRR programme was deemed relevant in terms of the directive from the National Treasury that the NRF must implement measures to increase cost savings without compromising its core mandate of research support and advancement.

3. The IFRR programme was never intended to be a primary instrument of the allocating research grants and driving student education or research output. The R30 million released from restructuring the IFRR constitutes only 1.25% of the R2.4 billion annual allocations for researcher and postgraduate and student support. The released funds will be re-allocated for researcher and student support through other funding instruments.