**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 3661**

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**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 39/2015**

**3661. Ms A T Lovemore (DA) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

(1) What are the details of her rationale in deciding to postpone the 2014 Annual National Assessments;

(2) what are the (a)(i) names, (ii) organisational and institutional affiliation and (iii) relevant expertise of the persons who will be part of the task team to decide on the way forward with respect to numeracy and literacy testing, (b) terms of reference of the task team and (c) time frames that will apply to the work of the task team;

(3) will she prescribe any aspects of numeracy and literacy testing; if so, what are the relevant details;

(4) will she propose the Western Cape model of annual systemic testing of numeracy and literacy during the talks; if not, why not? NW4328E

**RESPONSE:**

1. The 2015 Annual National Assessments were postponed from the original date of 15-18 September 2015, following the cellphone message (sms) that South African Democratic Teacher’s Union (SADTU) sent to Ministry, which prompted Ministry to invite all Teacher Unions to a meeting. Teacher unions raised concerns around the design of the assessment, including the scope and frequency of testing. Incidentally, these were not new issues to the Department of Basic Education. Actually, the Department had already gone ahead to invite public comments on a policy that will regulate the conduct and administration of the assessments, including matters of how frequently the assessments should be conducted, how the Departments can best utilise the results to improve the quality of learning and teaching in the system, and other relevant matters. The rationale and agreement from engaging with teacher unions is to establish a common understanding on a national assessment model that will help the Department achieve the important objective of monitoring the levels and quality of educational outcomes in basic education.

1. (a)(i) Representatives of the teacher unions and officials of the DBE have had an initial meeting and discussed the terms of reference for the Task Team. There are no names submitted yet on who will be on the Task Team, (ii) There are no names yet (iii) There are no names yet, (b) the terms of reference of the task team include developing and recommending to the Department a model of national assessments that will generate useful information for monitoring the levels and quality of basic education at regular intervals, and (c) the Task Team needs to complete its proposals within 90 days.
2. The Minister will shall await the recommendations of the Task Team and then decide on an appropriate course of action; including the appointment of a technical task team.
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