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**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 02/2022**

**370. Mrs D van der Walt (DA) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

(1)       Whether, with reference to the transfer of early childhood centres (ECDs) to her department, her department intends to put more emphasis on registering ECDs that are currently unregistered; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details;

(2)       whether she has found that the transfer is going to result in more resources for ECDs; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so,

(3)       whether there has been additional budget allocation for this purpose in the 2021-22 financial year; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

**Response**

1) The Department of Basic Education is committed to creating an enabling registration process to facilitate the registration of more ECD programmes. To this end, the Department of Basic Education has conducted the ECD Census to determine the number of unregistered ECD programmes, and to identify areas that may require additional registration support. The Department has also held a broad stakeholder engagement session on 30 November 2021 to better understand the challenges in the registration process. It is recognised that there is a multitude of challenges facing ECD programmes in the registration process, and the Department has been working alongside the Department of Social Development in the Second Children’s Amendment Bill to, among other things, address some of the challenges which arise from the legislation, regulations, norms and standards. Similarly, the Department is in the process of ensuring that an online registration capturing system is in place to streamline the back-end processes related to registration. Finally, the Department has also partnered with organisations in the sector on a research study to better understand the current barriers to registration emanating from the current norms and standards. This research will enable the Department to come up with a more developmentally appropriate approach to ECD registration.

2) The Government Handbook on Function Transfers clearly stipulates that the principle to be followed in a function shift is that resources follow function. That means that all resources (human, financial and capital) that are connected to a function, need to be transferred from the relinquishing department to the receiving department. As guided by the Department of Public Service & Administration and the National Treasury, the DBE and DSD have followed this principle closely. In the financial year following the function shift, the same resources that have been devoted to ECD by the DSD will be devoted to ECD in the DBE. That being said, the Department has had multiple meetings with the National Treasury to seek additional funding for ECD, where National Treasury has committed that they have included ECD as a top priority in subsequent years. The Department will be working very closely with the National Treasury in the 2022/23 financial year, to build a business case for additional funding. This business case will build on the evidence collected through the ECD Census, the Thrive by Five Index and the Public Expenditure and Institutional Review.

3) No additional budget was allocated to the ECD function shift during the 2021/22 financial year, given that the function shift is an administrative process. Projects aimed at future improvements to the ECD function were undertaken through partnerships with key donor organisations.