**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 490**

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**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 09/2017**

**Mr G R Davis (DA) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

**With regard to a presentation by her department to the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education on 28 February 2017, in which mention was made of progress towards the decolonisation of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) curriculum, (a) what definition of decolonisation is being used by her department for this purpose, (b) why was the CAPS curriculum not decolonised when it was introduced in 2012 and (c) what will a fully decolonised curriculum look like?**

**Response:**

1. There is no specific definition of the “decolonisation” of the curriculum that the Department uses in its policy documents. Decolonisation of the curriculum has been defined by different scholars and different sources. For example, Justice Mavhundla, in his presentation to the Executive Dean of Law at UNISA, on the occasion of reflecting on the project of the decolonization of education in South Africa, reminded those present that “in the year 1994, we did not throw through the window the contaminated water in the form of apartheid with the bowl…. What this means is that as we progress further into the future, we need then to have a *deliberate and progressive transformation* infused in our jurisprudence to accord with the modern dictates of the epoch we leave in”.

South African society as a whole including the Education System has been subject to much influence by Colonial powers that ruled our country and this needs to be addressed in current and future curriculum revision processes.

**(b)** The decolonisation of curriculum is a process that started as early as 1999. When CAPS was developed in 2011, some elements again aimed at the decolonisation of the curriculum were introduced.

Principles that buttress Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) are benchmarked on South African and African contexts and they are benchmarked to match international standards. They include:

* **Social transformation:** ensuring that the educational imbalances of the past are redressed, and that equal educational opportunities are provided for all sections of our population;
* **Active and critical learning:** encouraging an active and critical approach to learning, rather than rote and uncritical learning of given truths;
* **High knowledge and high skills:** the minimum standards of knowledge and skills to be achieved at each grade are specified and sets high, achievable standards in all subjects;
* **Progression:** content and context of each grade shows progression from simple to complex;
* **Human rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice:** infusing the principles and practices of social and environmental justice and human rights as defined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The National Curriculum Statement Grades 10 – 12 (General) is sensitive to issues of diversity such as poverty, inequality, race, gender, language, age, disability and other factors;
* **Valuing indigenous knowledge systems:** acknowledging the rich history and heritage of this country as important contributors to nurturing the values contained in the Constitution; and
* **Credibility, quality and efficiency:** providing an education that is comparable in quality, breadth and depth to those of other countries.

Therefore, tremendous progress has been made from 2000-2016 to decolonise the school curriculum, however there is still more that needs to be addressed.

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**(c)** A fully decolonized curriculum will entail a fully transformed curriculum policy regime, content of subjects, one that produces learners that are fully immersed in the indigenous knowledge system, and that which imbues a sense of pride to be an African armed with knowledge, skills and values that are internationally intelligible, and therefore equally equipped to be a proud citizen of the world and meet the skills challenges of the 21st century.