

## NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR ORAL REPLY  
QUESTION 370

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION: 01-11-2006  
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 37-2006)

DATE TO REPLY IN PARLIAMENT: 09-11-2006

**Ms M J J Matsomela to ask the Minister of Education:**

(1) Whether there are any grounds for complaints from students from previously disadvantaged higher education institutions that they are often marginalised in the new merger institutions as far as reasonable fees and equal working conditions for staff are concerned; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details;

(2) whether the merged higher education institutions mainly reflect the values and norms of former advantaged institutions rather than accommodate the needs and aspirations of formerly disadvantaged communities; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, (a) to what extent and (b) what are the further relevant details?

**N2134E**

**REPLY:**

1. Yes, there have been complaints of marginalization and we have attempted to address genuine grounds for complaint. Institutions have managed, through structured stakeholder dialogue, to develop unitary policies for staff and students. These include policies on academic programmes, student support and administration, and student fees. Currently, most merged institutions have harmonized conditions of service, staff salaries, and student fees. While these policies were developed through an inclusive process, there continue to be perceptions of inequality. The Department of Education, through the Merger Unit continues to monitor the impact of the choices and decisions of institutions, with a particular focus on student fees.
2. The mergers of higher-education institutions are intended to create new institutions with a new institutional culture and ethos. This is a complex process that cannot be achieved in a short time. New councils have been appointed with a mandate to define strategic plans and to give effect to new visions of inclusive universities.