

## NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

### FOR ORAL REPLY QUESTION 89

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**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 21-2006)**

**DATE TO REPLY IN PARLIAMENT: 16-08-2006**

#### **Mr V C Gore to ask the Minister of Education:**

- (1) What is her department's policy with regard to the provision and use of (a) open-source and (b) proprietary software;
- (2) whether her department has received any (a) discounts, (b) donations and/or (c) sponsorships for the provision and use of the abovementioned software for each of the previous five years; if so, what are the relevant details?

**N674E**

#### **REPLY:**

- (1) The Education Department supports the open source movement in principle. However, in practice our position is that schools must be able to choose between proprietary and open source software. Through making agreements with Microsoft and Symantec, for example, we have made it possible for managers, teachers and pupils to choose whether to use proprietary or open source software.
- (2) Yes, a number of computer companies have donated software to our schools. For example, in 2002 the Department signed a three-year agreement with Microsoft under which over 4,000 schools, 60,000 teachers, and 2.8 million pupils in all provinces benefited from the use of software to a market value of R83.6 million.

In 2005 Microsoft extended the agreement for one year only. However, the agreement also included teacher training, the establishment of a School Technology Innovation Centre, a hardware refurbishing centre, and research into the use of ICT in education.

We are currently negotiating the extension of the agreement with Microsoft.

Another example is our agreement with Symantec. In 2005, Symantec agreed to provide all schools with free anti-virus/security software. Provision to provinces is currently taking place and the agreement ends on 31 December 2006. The Department is currently negotiating with Symantec to extend the period for three more years.