

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

QUESTION FOR ORAL REPLY

QUESTION NUMBER 86

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MR M STEPHENS (UDM) TO ASK THE MINISTER OF FINANCE:

- (1) Whether the comment made by a certain person (name furnished) in a prepared speech on 6 April 2005, wherein he said that at a meeting with senior Treasury officials it was made clear in no uncertain terms that higher education was not a priority of government, is a reflection of government policy with regard to funding for higher education; if not, why is higher education not a funding priority for the National Treasury;
- (2) whether he will discipline the senior Treasury officials involved; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (3) what has the National Treasury done to assist higher education according to the priority assigned to it? **N863E**

REPLY:

Madam Speaker, allow me to answer the question generally, and hoping the specific concerns raised by the Hon member will be covered. Officials from National Treasury have engaged from time to time in discussions with representatives of both the Department of Education and the higher education sector on the spending priorities of government and of the education sector. Within the development reality of South Africa, Government faces various development priorities, with higher education as one among the many. This view of Government on these matters is elaborated on in the Budget Review, the Estimates of National Expenditure and the Intergovernmental Fiscal Review.

Those documents, for example, set out a pattern of steady increase over the years in the funding of higher education and consistently increasing injections of funds into the National Student Financial Aid Scheme. In more recent years, the recapitalisation and transformation of higher education institutions and further education colleges have received substantial allocations.