STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION, PROFESSOR BLADE NZIMANDE ON THE NON-PAYMENT OF STUDENT ALLOWANCES BY THE NATIONAL STUDENT FINANCIAL AID SCHEME (NSFAS)

11 APRIL 2024

The Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, Professor Blade Nzimande, is aware of, and deeply disturbed by the recurring problem of non-payment of student allowances by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS).

Given the magnitude of this problem and its negative impact on the well-being of students and the continued functioning of our post school education and training system, in the next few days, the Minister will be taking a series of additional and decisive steps, all of which are intended to have the problem of non-payment of allowances resolved as a matter of priority.

As part of this series of decisive steps, the Minister has done the following-

1. The Minister has instructed NSFAS, supported by the Department to immediately establish a dedicated Task Team that will visit all the TVET Colleges and Universities, where students are experiencing serious NSFAS related problems. This Task Team has already started working.

2. In respect of the 2024 academic cycle, against valid registration records received on the 15th of March 2024, NSFAS has paid the disbursements for University and TVET College students.

3. For the latest payment cycle, NSFAS has paid TVET College student allowances and tuition to the value of **R511,106,120** in total, which is divided as follows:

   Tuition to colleges - **R147,115,846**
   Allowances via TVET colleges – **R34,831,311**
   NSFAS Card Allowances- **R298,971,220**
   Student Accommodation via solution providers – **R30,187,743**

4. For Universities, NSFAS has paid allowances and tuition to the value of **R2, 306,583,222,00** in total, which is divided as follows:

   Tuition to universities – **R1,258,865,972,00**
   Allowances via universities – **R653,954,716,00**
   Direct payment to students – **R393,762,534,00**

5. Regrettably, not all TVET Colleges and Universities have complied with the NSFAS deadline of 15 March 2024, for the submission of student registration data to facilitate the payment of allowances. The failure to comply by some TVET Colleges and Universities has contributed to the latest sporadic student protests.

6. To address this, the Minister dispatched the Director-General to have an urgent meeting with the NSFAS management. This meeting happened this morning and it was intended to ensure that working with institutions, all outstanding allowances are paid as soon as it is practicable.

7. In addition, NSFAS has sent its servicing administrators to work with the non-compliant TVET Colleges and Universities to finalise the submission of student registration data and ensure that the outstanding student allowances and tuition is paid in the next payment cycle.

8. Later today, the Minister will be meeting with the NSFAS Board and Management, with the view to communicate his intended action and to request their support in ensuring that NSFAS remains functional and focused on its core mandate.

9. As part of this statement, the Minister also wishes to announce the resignation of Mr. Ernest Khosa as chairperson of the NSFAS Board. The Minister has accepted Mr. Khosa’s resignation and wishes him well in his future endeavours.

10. Further to all this, the Minister intends to engage all key stakeholders in the sector such as student leadership, USAf and SAPCO, with the view to ensure that the issues of non-payment of NSFAS student allowances and related challenges, are resolved as a matter of priority.

The Minister also wishes to take this opportunity to sincerely apologise to all affected students for the inconvenience that they have been experiencing, as a result of the non-payment of allowances.

The Minister also wishes to assure both the students and the public that both he and the Department, are working around the clock to ensure that all deserving students receive the necessary support from NSFAS.

Further more, the Minister wishes to request all stakeholders in the sector to co-operate and work together with the Department in the quest to resolve these problems.

Working together we will be able to solve all these problems. Further announcements will be made in the coming days on further action to be taken by the Minister to address these matters.

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ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION