

## MEDIA STATEMENT

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EMBARGO: NONE

### EDUCATION SECTOR SET UP FOR FAILURE

The SAOU has noted with shock and dismay that the Provincial Education Departments remain unable to provide adequate staffing at schools and also for district and regional offices. The number of learners in the education system has increased over the last couple of years and yet the number of teacher posts have remained static. The implication is that teachers are confronted with overcrowding in classes, infrastructure which cannot accommodate the growing number of learners and an increase in discipline and management problems in schools.

The victims of this ongoing incompetence are in the first instance the educators who have to deal with unrealistically sized classes and with learner numbers which would be rejected out of hand in many countries.

The silent majority of victims remain the learners who cannot receive quality education in these conditions, with a result of growing unemployment in the coming years.

An education system cannot function effectively without suitable provision of resources including human resources and the consequences of continued neglect of this matter by the authorities in effect implies a further decline in the effectiveness of the education system and of schools. The current narrative about vacancies includes teaching posts, promotion posts and supervisory posts in the provincial structures.

The SAOU stresses that wellness issues for teachers are becoming endemic to the system and that the effectiveness of educators is being materially disadvantaged by the ongoing provincial neglect. In addition learners and their parents are directly affected by the absence of teachers, by non-functioning provincial offices and by the ongoing failure of the authorities to provide full resourcing for all public schools.

The SAOU notes a variety of departmental initiatives which will increase the numbers of pupils in schools including learners in the foundation phase. The demands on the system of these initiatives cannot be dealt with adequately if suitable provision of human and other resources is not made as a matter of urgency.

The SAOU calls upon the provincial education departments to reprioritise their planning in such a way as to make possible the filling of all posts and the maximising of the efficiency of the

provincial education systems to provide quality education.

It is a disgrace which can no longer be tacitly accepted!