

# ANNEXURE F

## The Visually Impaired Educators' Forum of South Africa

July 10 2015

### Introduction

The visually impaired educators' forum of South Africa (VIEFSA) was launched at Brooklyn on 10 December, 2012. It was an historic occasion, bringing together the visually impaired educators from all over South Africa. In doing so, (VIEFSA) made an important contribution to the struggle against unequal treatment and lack of sensitivity of reasonable accommodation for visually impaired educators. The main aim of (VIEFSA) is to eradicate all forms of inequality in education and to strive towards an equal, fair, just and democratic system of education in South Africa. (VIEFSA) is committed to overcome the legacy of the past dispensation's education, and regards the forum as an effective instrument through which they can voice their concerns and participate in transformative programs of national reconstruction and development. (VIEFSA) consists of visually impaired educators in special schools, mainstream schools and any educational institution where visually impaired educators are employed as educators. In 2013-2014 there were about 40 visually impaired educators who were part of the forum from various provinces.

### Challenges

Following are some of the challenges which were identified by visually impaired educators during the meetings of the forum:

- + Visually impaired educators are not given policies (CAPS) related in both Braille and large print.
- + Teachers are not provided with Braille and large printed textbooks (CAPS) as well as their teacher's guides.
- + Visually impaired educators not fully accommodated during the workshops arranged by the subject- advisers and education officials. During these meetings visually impaired educators are not provided with Braille and large print handouts and reading sources.
- + Lack of class-assistant for most visually impaired educators.
- + External question papers coming to schools not brailled and adapted.
- + Some educators who newly became blind taken out of

the system without being correctly advised about other options for them to remain employed.

- + Lack of training aimed at visually impaired educators.
- + Lack of assistive devices for both low vision and blind educators.

Some of the above mentioned challenges the forum has brought to the attention of DBE (Inclusive directorate) and the National council for the blind. A meeting was arranged in 2013 with the DBE (Inclusive directorate) to address some of these challenges with little success. The chairperson of the forum did present some of the challenges to the National council for the blind's biennial conference in 2013. The forum has endeavored to give voice to challenges faced by visually impaired educators however, funding proved a major impediment to this intention. This is so because the forum had depended on National council for the blind to fund its meetings when funds are available to do so.