**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**FRIDAY, 20 MAY 2016**

**Due Date: 3 June 2016**

1471. Ms A Steyn (DA) to ask the Deputy President:

 (1) Whether he is monitoring the impact and effects of the recent drought on Government’s War on Poverty Programme; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details; (2) whether the specified programme has put any measures in place to ensure that there is no drastic increase in the number of citizens without access to food due to the recent drought; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details of the measures that have been put in place in this regard? NW1640E

**REPLY**

The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) is monitoring the impact and effect of the recent drought throughout the country. The Department is a lead institution for the National Agro-meteorological Committee (NAC) which provides monthly advisory and early warning information on the rainfall season and impact on agricultural production for the whole country.

The drought is causing higher food prices in South Africa. Food inflation rose to 11% in April 2016. The Department continues to monitor retail food prices and likely impact on the poorest people through the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC). The cost of the basic food basket expressed as a share of the average monthly income of the poorest 30% of the population (mostly residing in War on Poverty sites) increased from 48.3% in April 2015 to 56.2% in April 2016.

The department is also a lead institution for the South African Vulnerability Assessment Committee (SAVAC), which conducts vulnerability and food and nutrition security assessments. The 2016 assessment is underway and is focusing mainly on the impact of the drought on livelihoods. The severity and magnitude of the impact of the drought on agricultural and non-agricultural livelihoods will have to be understood for better targeting of programmes and quantifying the support required.

DAFF is a lead institution for a Multi-sectoral Food Security Drought Response Team that includes line function departments that are implementing different programmes aimed at addressing the impact of drought on food and nutrition security.

The Department has reprioritised funds from the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme and Ilima/Letsema campaign to provide for immediate responses to the agricultural sector. Provision of animal feed and water resources for affected livestock farmers, especially smallholder and subsistence farmers, has been prioritised. The department has also invested in programmes such as equipping and drilling of boreholes. Furthermore, programmes to combat land degradation (including veld rehabilitation, control of declared alien weeds and invader species and promotion of conservation agriculture) are being implemented.

A Food and Nutrition Security Drought Response Plan has been developed and costed. The plan includes interventions such as social relief measures, households food production support, enhancing access to drought-tolerant seeds, expansion of the National School Nutrition Programme, health and nutrition responses to drought and a water sector response to drought in the affected areas.