

**MINISTRY FOR HUMAN SETTLEMENTS**

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO.: 4211**

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**Mr S M Gana (DA) to ask the Minister of Human Settlements:**

(1) What was the cost to her department in terms of assisting the families of persons who were affected by shack fires in informal settlements in the (a) 2012-13, (b) 2013-14 and (c) 2014-15 financial years;

(2) whether her department has any strategies in place to combat the impact of shack fires in informal settlements; if not, why not; if so, what kind of assistance is given to the victims of shack fires;

(3) whether her department has any strategies in place to provide assistance to the families of persons who were affected by shack fires; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details? NW5088E

**REPLY:**

(1) The Department of Human Settlements does not keep records of families or persons who were affected by shack fires in informal settlements and the related costs. However, the Department does keep track of these incidents through its interaction with Municipalities and Provinces. An important source of information, which the Department relies upon, is the published reports of the Fire Protection Association of Southern Africa (FPASA). Currently, published information by the FPASA is available for four years being 2010 until 2013. The 2014 statistics will be available in March 2016 and the 2015 statistics will be available in March 2017.

**2010 - 2013 Fire Incidents Report**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Year | No of fire incidents | Financial damage/losses | | |
| Formal | Informal | Formal | Informal |
| 2010 | 2 578 | 2 590 | R 525 406 578 | R 64 719 575 |
| 2011 | 3 943 | 4 046 | R 576 242 642 | R 102 389 740 |
| 2012 | 4 593 | 4 516 | R 556 062 426 | R 114 556 248 |
| 2013 | 4 859 | 4 886 | R 770 392 753 | R 117 693 080 |

(2) The Department has the Informal Settlements Upgrading Programme (ISUP) whose primary objective is to cater for improving the basic infrastructure and dwelling standards and quality of life of households living in informal settlements. The ISUP for the current MTSF aims to ensure that 750 000 households living in 2200 informal settlements benefit from improved living conditions, and this include preventative measures from the threats and causes of fires.

(3) The Department has made grant funding available and through the municipalities, provides assistance to the families of persons who were affected by shack fires. The Programme involves fast tracking the provision of security of tenure, basic municipal services, social and economic amenities and the empowerment of residents in informal settlements to take control of housing development directly applicable to them. The grants include the Human Settlements Development Grant (HSDG) as well as the Urban Settlements Development Grant (USDG).

In the case of where a fire destroys a “shack”, the relevant grants provided by the Department are flexible enough to allow for the reconstruction and/or construction of temporary housing and related relief for households to recover from the effects of a fire. This includes the enlisting of the support of Departments of Social Development and Home Affairs and private donors to support recovery efforts.

In the Metropolitan areas the Department in conjunction with the Metropolitan Municipalities are funding the roll-out of solar lighting as well as improved cooking facilities for households, in order to limit the use of fossil fuels and liquid fuels, which are a major cause of fires in informal settlements.