**MINISTRY FOR HUMAN SETTLEMENTS**

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO.: 1056**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION: 11 APRIL 2016**

**Ms T Gqada (DA) to ask the Minister of Human Settlements:**

(1) Whether her department uses a standard checklist for the upgrading of informal settlements; if not, why not; if so,

(2) whether she will provide Ms T Gqada with a copy of the specified checklist;

(3) (a) how many informal settlements have been upgraded (i) in the (aa) 2012-13, (bb) 2013-14, (cc) 2014-15 and (dd) 2015-16 financial years and (ii) since 1 April 2016 as part of her department’s informal settlements upgrade programmes, (b) what are the names of these settlements, (c) where is each specified settlement situated and (d) which services did each specified settlement receive during its upgrade?  NW1189E

**REPLY:**

(1) The National Housing Code contains a comprehensive set of guidelines for the upgrading and development of informal settlements. The guidelines assist human settlements and housing practitioners in planning, funding and implementation of the approved informal settlements upgrading policy and programme. It is to be noted that the guidelines contained in the National Housing Code have been bench-marked and aligned to international good practice and that component parts of the South Africa policy, funding and implementation good practice, have been incorporated into international and national country policies and programmes.

In terms of the Upgrading of Informal Settlements Programme (UISP), informal settlement upgrading should be undertaken in phases, with Phases 1 to 3 focusing on community participation, supply of basic services and security for all residents. The priority is to address issues of household health and safety including the provision of interim services as a minimum norm and standard, in the form of reasonable access to water, sanitation, storm water management and road access to households. The current upgrading approach is incremental and infrastructure-led, and recognises that meaningful developmental improvements need to be provided to all informal settlements as rapidly as possible. Upon a settlement having been formalised in the form of planning and tenure security, services and homes are built for qualifying beneficiaries. The upgrading of a specific informal settlement takes place over a multi-year period, and is dependent on a number of factors including stipulated time periods required in the town planning process, applicable specialist studies including environment impact assessments, ecological, heritage, soil, vegetation and geotechnical studies. One of the major time delays are objections to the upgrading of informal settlements when they are situated adjacent to established townships.

(2) The National Housing Code: Upgrading of Informal Settlements Programme systematically details the process and procedure for the in situ upgrading of informal settlements in a structured manner. The key principles to be followed by implementers of the Programme are specified, including,

 **Community Engagement** by their local authorities is of the utmost importance to ensure locally appropriate solutions. A feasibility study is to be conducted on the upgradeability of the settlement, and households must be profiled to determine beneficiaries. Detailed settlement level plans are to be development with the participation of the community;

 **Tenure:** The Programme promotes security of tenure as the foundation for future individual and public investment. A check is done on land ownership to ensure security of tenure;

 **Suitable land:** The programme will only provide funding in respect of informal settlements situated on land suitable for permanent residential development and within an approved IDP of the municipality concerned.

 **Service standards:** The Programme provides funding for the installation of interim and permanent municipal engineering services. Where interim services are to be provided it must always be undertaken on the basis that such interim services constitute the first phase of the provision of permanent services. The nature and level of permanent engineering infrastructure must be the subject of engagement between the local authority and residents. Community needs must be balanced with community preferences, affordability indicators and sound engineering practice;

(3) (a) (i) (aa)During **2012-13** a total of **203** informal settlements were upgraded;

 (bb)During **2013-14** a total of **113** informal settlements were upgraded;

 (cc)During **2014-15** a total of **127** informal settlements were upgraded;

(dd)During **2015-16** a total of **95** informal settlements were upgraded;

 (ii) Since 1 April 2016, **17** informal settlements were upgraded.

(b) to (d) We do report on project developments undertaken in our annual report and I would suggest that the Honourable member consult these reports for information dating back to 2012.

In addition, I wish to remind the Honourable member that during my budget Vote speech in the National Assembly on 3 May 2016, I indicated that urbanisation and the resultant mushrooming of informal settlements is something we are grappling with. I specifically said,

**“Last month we had the honour of hosting an International UN conference, in preparation for the Third UN Habitat Conference – a world conference that takes place every 20 years and which will now take place in Quito, Ecuador in October. We had 512 delegates from 54 different countries, and representatives of 54 governments, including 14 Ministers of Housing and we were given the opportunity to shape and influence the future of international human settlement discourse and subsequent policy and practice. The theme of the conference was “Urbanization and Informal Settlements”. This was our choice as host country. We chose it because that is our present and pressing challenge with many of our people still living in squalor in places such as Khayelitsha, Gugulethu, Nyanga, Philippi, Soweto, Orange Farm, Polokwane, Mahikeng, Tshwane, eMlazi and all whom we dedicate today. The conference grappled with the staggering figures presented”.**

Despite all the challenges we are faced with, South Africa is counted among the countries that have made significant contributions to improving the lives of those living in informal settlements, and we will continue to do so.

In the recent StatsSA survey, released in March, it is confirmed that amid growing urbanisation, the percentage of people living in informal settlements has dropped from 17% in 2002 to 11% in 2014.