Official reply: 20 May 2016

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION 114/2016**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

Date of publication on internal question paper: 11 February 2016

Internal question paper no: 01

**114. Ms B S Masango (DA) to ask the Minister of Social Development:**

(1) What has been the effect of the recent severe drought on the vulnerable groups in South Africa in terms of (a) food insecurity, (b) escalating food prices and (c) household water shortages for especially the elderly in rural areas who cannot walk long distances to fetch water;

(2) whether her department has put any measures in place to support the specified groups during the drought; if not, why not; if so, what measures has her department put in place to support the specified groups;

(3) whether any plans have been put in place to compensate grant recipients for the projected increases in food prices due to the drought; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details? NW114E

**Reply:**

1. The recent severe drought has had a severe impact on the vulnerable groups in South Africa in terms of (a) food insecurity, (b) escalating food prices and (c) household water shortages.

According to the Issue 3 - March 2016 Food Basket Price Monthly report from the National Agricultural Marketing Council and the Food Price Monitoring Committee using the Stats SA data, In February 2016 the price a basic 22 item food basket increased by approximately R56 (+10.86%) in nominal terms from R510 to R566.

It is projected that South Africa will need to import an estimated five million tons of maize between May this year and April 2017, which will weigh heavily on the trade deficit.

Water shortages were reported across various Provinces, Districts, Local Municipalities and Communities. The drought disaster declared areas were supported with various measures including the supply of water using water tankers in Local Municipalities and the affected communities.

1. The Social Assistance Act, Act 13 of 2004 mandates the Department through the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) to provide social relief of distress (SRD) to any person in need of immediate relief, provided they meet certain prescribed criteria. One such criterion is that the person has been affected by a disaster as defined in the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act No. 57 of 2002).

During this drought period SASSA has continued to provide SRD to affected households. By December 2015, the following beneficieries were supported:

* 2 271 SRD disbursed in a form of cash
* 49 387 SRD disbursed in a form of food parcels
* 46 681 SRD disbursed in a form of vouchers

Over and above SRD provision DSD also continue to implement various programmes that seek to provide relief to the food insecure and vulnerable households, incliding the drought affected households. Below is the overview of other interventions that provide food relief to the effected specified groups, the number of beneficieries and the projected budget allocation to the programmes:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **PROGRAMME** | **TOTAL NUMBER** | **BUDGET** |
| Community Nutrition & Development Centres (CNDCs) | 166 CNDCs reaching about 1,901 952 beneficiaries | R175 million (FY 16/17)  |
| Drop Inn Centres (DIC) | 678 DICs | R1, 7 million |
| Social Relief of Distress (SRD) | 263 057 beneficiaries | R 450 million |
| Early Childhood Development Centres (registered) | 26 553 ECDs & 1.5million children | R1,9 Billion |
| Social assistance | 16 million social grant beneficiaries in SA | R130 Billion per year,  |

1. In the financial year 2016/17 budget speech the Minister of Finance announced the the social grants increase as follows:
* The old age, disability and care dependency grants will rise by R80 to R1 500 in April 2016 and by a further R10 to R1 510 in October.
* The child support grant will rise by R20 to R350 in April and the foster care grant by R30 to R890.

This overall increased expenditure on social assistance from R129 billion to R165 billion in 2018/19 reflects a decisive intention to curb food insecurity challenges amongst the poor and vulnerable people in our country. This will also curb the impact of drought amongst food insecure and vulnerable citizens.