

**MINISTER**

**HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, WATER AND SANITATION**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO.: 1367**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION: 21 MAY 2021**

**Mrs M R Mohlala (EFF) to ask the Minister of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation:**

Whether her department has made any COVID-19 rental relief grant available to beneficiaries; if not, why not; if so, what (a) total amount has been paid to beneficiaries to date and (b) are the names of the specified beneficiaries? **NW1560E**

**REPLY:**

Honourable Member, during the budget vote debate of the Department of Human Settlements (Vote 33) on 18 May 2021 I said;

“I wish to take this opportunity to restate what I said last year in this House about Social Housing and the Affordable Rental Relief Programme. I indicated in 2020 that this rental relief is solely aimed at assisting tenants in formal affordable rental housing to meet their monthly rent obligations. Of course, means testing will form part of necessary criteria to determine those who can be assisted. R600 million is allocated for this purpose”.

For those who might not be familiar with the language that we use, affordable rental housing is government subsidised rental housing, managed through the Social Housing Regulatory Authority. It cannot, as some has tried to interpret, mean the private rental space. So the category that we identified is the affordable rental sector. The private sector has no project for affordable rental housing and we have no jurisdiction over the private sector housing rental. When you hear the term affordable rental housing, it is our rental programme managed by the Social Housing Regulatory Authority. We did indeed request R600 million to assist those who find themselves in distress in our housing institutions. This we did in our 2020 budget.

However, the Minister of Finance, in his Adjustments Appropriation approved R300 million to SHRA and the remaining R300 million to the NHFC/ Housing Bank. These amounts have now been transferred to the two entities. Therefore, R300 million to assist those who rent from the State to offset the impediments caused by the pandemic. The policies and qualifications are available from SHRA.

Similarly, R300 million was allocated to the NHFC to offset the debt incurred by its own clients. The amounts were not allocated to these two institutions to use for rental relief in the private sector. I want to emphasis, we cannot and do not regulate rental for the private sector. We regulate that which is under our jurisdiction. Our people should not allow those who are ignorant to mislead them”.