**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER: 1769**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 06 MAY 2022**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NUMBER: 16 - 2022**

**1769. Ms B S Masango (DA) to ask the Minister of Social Development:**

What (a) total number of children were reported as abandoned in (i) 2018, (ii) 2019, (iii) 2020 and (iv) 2021, (b) programmes have been put in place to address abandoned children, (c) are the main reasons for child abandonment in the Republic and (d) total amount of the budget is allocated to addressing child abandonment? NW2098E

**REPLY:**

**(a) Total number of children reported as abandoned in (i) 2018, (ii) 2019, (iii) 2020 and (iv) 2021**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **PERIOD** | **NUMBER OF CHILDREN REPORTED AS ABONDONED** |
| 1. 2018 | April 2017 – March 2018 | 144 |
| 1. 2019 | April 2018 – March 2019 | 229 |
| 1. 2020 | April 2019 – March 2020 | 589 |
| 1. 2021 | April 2020 – March 2021 | 435 |

**(b) The following programmes / interventions are put in place and provided in cases of abandoned children:**

* In the case of an abandoned child, the Children’s Act 38 of 2005 stipulates that a social worker must gather all necessary information and affidavit/s from person/s who found or reported the child as abandoned and to report the case to police for investigation.
* The Department works with the South African Police Service (SAPS), to try and trace families of abandoned children.
* The Act makes provision for abandoned children in terms of section 150 and these children are identified as children in need of care and protection. These children can be placed in appropriate alternative care, meaning temporary safe care whilst awaiting finalisation of court proceedings on the decision for placement in foster care or child and youth care centre. Another child protection measure is adoption of such children. Section 157(3) of the Act provides that a very young child who has been abandoned must be made available for adoption in terms of Regulation 56 of the Children’s Act. Adoption as a permanent placement option gives a child the chance of growing up in a permanent family.
* Adoption services are promoted to address and sensitize communities on the dangers of child abandonment and made them aware of the available services such as counselling and support to biological parents with unwanted pregnancies and those who cannot care for their children. The service is also promoted to encourage communities to adopt children who are available for adoption and inform them of the benefits of adoption to the children and families.
* In addition to the above, the Department also provides, a programme called Risiha, which is a Community-Based intervention programme that renders core package of services within communities.
* Resiha programme is a prevention and an early intervention programmes that support families, parents and caregivers in distress, identifying risk factors that would put children’s lives in danger and further preventing vulnerabilities of children.

**(c)** The main reasons for child abandonment in the Republic are physio economic challenges, family breakdown and lack of family support.

**(d)** A total amount of R50 331 000.00 is allocated to the National Department’s Unit dealing with Children Services inclusive of child abandonment for this financial year 2022/2023.