Official reply: 13 September 2017

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

Date of publication on internal question paper: 07 August 2017

Internal question paper no: 25

**2127. Ms B S Masango (DA) to ask the Minister of Social Development:**

(a) What amount has the SA Social Security Agency spent on blankets in the (i) 2014-15, (ii)  2015-16 and (iii) 2016-17 financial years respectively and (b) in each case, what is the detailed breakdown of the specified expenditure in each province? NW2358E

**Reply:**

1. The South African Social Security Agency issues blanketsto deserving beneficiaries under the Social Relief of Distress programme, and as part of promotional items within communications and marketing. When blankets are issues as promotional items, they are targeted towards older persons, in recognition of the contribution they have made to building a democratic South Africa, and ensuring cohesion in local communities.

SASSA manages the social relief of distress programme in line with the provisions as legislated in the Social Assistance Act, 2004 (as amended). The legislation empowers SASSA to provide social relief of distress to South African citizens, permanent residents and refugees, where they meet certain criteria. One of the criteria is that social relief of distress may be provided where communities are affected by a disaster, even where that area is not declared a disaster area. This enables SASSA to respond to localized incidents such as floods, fire and other disasters.

The social relief of distress may be issued in the form of food vouchers, food parcels, school uniforms or cash, depending on the reason for the issuing of the social relief of distress, as well as the specific arrangements made in the affected province. Where social relief of distress is provided as a response to disasters, the assistance may take the form of pre-cooked hot meals, meal packs, **blankets,** dignity packs and/or mattresses. The actual assistance provided depends on the specific needs of the affected communities. In addition to the immediate humanitarian assistance provided, in instances where the affected community lost all their possessions, for instance in the case of fire, the families may be provided with a once off cash amount when they are ready to return to their homes. This is to assist in buying some of the household items which were lost in the disaster. However, SASSA does not provide household items as part of the social relief of distress programme.

1. The table below reflects the amount spent on blankets issued per province for the financial years: 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17.

