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**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER: 2174**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 03 JUNE 2022**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NUMBER: 22 - 2022**

**2174. Ms A L A Abrahams (DA) to ask the Minister of Social Development:**

(1) Given that in 2020 it was found that no national government policy and/or legislation exists which speaks to homelessness in the Republic, which leaves the specified group of individuals vulnerable, what progress has been made by her department regarding the specified gap in government policy and legislation;

(2) by what date does she envisage such government policy and/or legislation will be available to present (a) to the Portfolio Committee on Social Development and (b) for public input;

(3) what (a) is the responsibility of her department in the daily plight of homeless individuals and (b) has been the areas of co-operation between her department and (i) provinces and (ii) municipalities in this regard? NW2580E

**REPLY:**

(1) Homelessness is a cross cutting issue which requires a collaborative effort in addressing it. The department of Social Development is amongst the  key departments that are relevant in dealing with Homelessness. The department of social development's role is to provide psychosocial support services, reunification and reintegration programmes to the homelessness. the department further provide alternative care to those children and older person in terms of both the Children's Act 38 of 2005 and the Older Persons' Act 13 of 2006 to those eligible. Currently it is not clear which department is mandated to take a lead in this regard, however the department took an initiative to lead the development of the Policy for Homeless, to this end the department is in a process of finalising the rapid assessment and a diagnostic study on homeless which will be used as a basis for the development of the Policy. The aim of the study is to understand the nature and extent of the problem,  what interventions are available; and the existing policy gaps.

(2).  Once the department working jointly with other key departments has concluded all the processes which amongst include broad consultation with key stakeholder, presentation to different  cluster departments and holding bi-laterals with the critical departments that have to directly implement the Policy, the Policy will be presented to Cabinet for consideration for approval.

(3).  Currently there is no national policy on homelessness but each province has put various systems and interventions in place to address the plight of homeless people in their respective provinces.  For example, Gauteng and Western Cape have dedicated shelters and budget to address homelessness.  They also have guidelines and norms and standards for the operation of those shelters.  However, other provinces do not have dedicated shelters and budget, but have repurposed other existing structures in order to address the issues of homeless people.  Provinces are working closely with other key stakeholders such as COGTA, SALGA, SAPS, Home Affairs, Human Settlement, and Health, in order to provide comprehensive integrated services to the homeless.