**MINISTRY FOR HUMAN SETTLEMENTS**

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO.: 3628**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION: 18 SEPTEMBER 2015**

**Mr S Esau (DA) to ask the Minister of Human Settlements:**

(1) What total number of houses did her department plan to build for military veterans (a) in the (i) 2010-11, (ii) 2011-12, (iii) 2012-13, (iv) 2013-14 and (v) 2014-15 financial years and (b) from 1 April 2015 to the latest specified date for which information is available;

(2) how many of the intended total number of houses were (a) allocated and (b) handed over to beneficiaries in each of the specified financial years and time period;

(3) how were (a) beneficiaries identified and (b) houses allocated in each of the specified financial years and time period? NW4296E

**REPLY:**

I wish to advise the Honourable member that details of the implementation of the special housing assistance dispensation for military veterans was concluded with the gazetting of the Military Veterans Regulations only on 19 February 2014 through Government Gazette No 37355 of 2014. This paved the way for proper planning and implementation of the programme. Accordingly, during my budget vote speech in July 2014, I indicated that *“We will establish a dedicated Branch, headed by a DDG, to ensure that all 5 854 indigent military veterans receive houses in less than three years”.* In essence, planning for the delivery of houses for the military veterans commenced in the 2014/15 financial year. 'Prior, those military veterans whom were classified as indigent benefited from the normal housing programme for the indigent.

In addition, I am the first to admit to the slow delivery of houses to military veterans during the Govan Mbeki Awards on 13 August 2015, I indicated that:

*“First we are going to prioritise the military veterans. Their plight is a sad one that does need to be repeated here. In view of the extreme insensitivity that is very easily attached to the delays that have been experienced by our military veterans, I would like to indicate, on behalf of government, that we care very deeply concerned about their plight. The delay has not been deliberate, but I have now taken a decision that we will prove our worth to them.*

*The Deputy Ministers of Military Veterans and Human Settlements and I have met with various groupings of military veterans in the Eastern Cape, Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal and I have taken the decision that we will complete the more than 5 000 houses for military veterans who are on our database in the current financial year. The Military Veterans Housing Programme will be a national Ministerial programme. It will be coordinated by the Deputy Minister of Human Settlements as a national project, resources for the project will be ring-fenced and the military veterans themselves will appoint a national task team, through the Deputy Minister of Military Veterans and who will work closely with the Deputy Minister of Human Settlements. It is my intention that by March 2016 there should be no military veteran on our data base who is not housed through our intervention”.*

I responded to question 3217 posed by an Honourable Gana on this important matter of military veterans as follows:

“**Honourable member, we are currently in the final stages of concluding contractual agreements on this matter to ensure that we complete the more than 5 000 houses for military veterans who are on our database in the current financial year. Once this is done, I will provide a progress report to the Portfolio Committee on Human Settlements”.**

Beneficiaries were sourced from the database that is provided by the Department of Military Veterans. In instances where excluded beneficiaries approach provincial officials, they forward names of those beneficiaries to the Department of Military Veterans for verification whether they qualify to be military veterans or not.

Allocation of houses follows the extensive verification exercise to confirm beneficiaries' availability and extent of their qualification for housing assistance. In some instances Military Veterans Associations do take part in the verification exercise done by provinces.