**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 3755/ NW4439E**

**MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES:**

Ms D Carter (Cope) to ask the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries:

 **QUESTION**

1. Whether the Government is taking proactive steps to deal with water shortages in all of the provinces afflicted by drought so that farmers can continue their operations by using the limited supplies in the best manner possible;
2. whether water recycling was occurring optimally in the specified and other province allow for food production to take place with the greatest availability of water that technology can make possible; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
3. whether he will make a statement on how the extraction of water from aquifers is managed scientifically and through regulatory means? NW4439E

**REPLY**

1. The Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) continues to monitor conditions in the provinces and issue updated early warning information/ advisory information to the sector which includes strategies to implement during dry conditions. Such strategies include:
* Usage of grey water especially in food gardens.
* Harvesting water during rainy days.
* Irrigating in the late afternoon/ early evening to reduce evaporation.
* Using drip irrigation instead of sprinklers as it saves water.

The provincial departments of agriculture have made funding requests to the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) through their Provincial Disaster Management Centres (PDMC) requesting assistance in the form of rehabilitation and construction of water resources in farms hardly hit by drought. The provincial requests are made through normal drought disaster declaration and classification processes.

In addition to the normal disaster funding applications, the department is furthermore implementing the Prevention and Mitigation of Disaster Risks projects which is aimed at risk reduction that addresses mitigation and prevention measures. These projects considers the drilling and equipping of boreholes in provinces, especially those in dire need as a result of dry conditions or drought. To date, boreholes have been drilled and equipped in Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Free State and North West Provinces.

In mitigating the impact of dry conditions that culminate to water shortage and drought on farmers, the department has further developed coping strategies of various natural hazards. To date, coping strategies for drought have been developed and published into all official languages to be understood by all. These strategies were issued to farmers and officials. Farmers are constantly encouraged to adapt to the changing conditions, that is, to consider suitable farming operations and implement good farming practices as conditions are also aggravated by poor practices.

Furthermore, roving seminars on weather and climate are continually being conducted in all the provinces. The main objective of these seminars is to make farmers more self-reliant by helping them become better informed about effective weather and climate risk management for the sustainable use of natural resources for agricultural production.

1. This is the mandate of the Department of Water and Sanitation.
2. This s the mandate of the Department of Water and Sanitation.