**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

# QUESTION NO: 877

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## INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 16 OF 2019

**Ms F A Masiko (ANC) to ask the Minister in the Presidency for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities:**

What programmes does her department have in place to preserve, advance and promote women’s dignity and health, particularly during critical feminine cycles when indigent women and girls cannot access the much-needed products such as sanitary pads? NW2007E

**REPLY**

The Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (DWYPD) has developed an Implementation Framework on Sanitary Dignity in an effort to ensure that indigent girls and women are afforded the opportunity to manage menstruation in a knowledgeable, safe and dignified manner. This Framework was launched on 28 February 2019 and approved by Cabinet on 18 September, 2019. The DWYPD is responsible for the coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the Framework. The key objective of the Framework is to provide for an integrated and coordinated responsive Government programme aimed at the provision of sanitary products free of charge to indigent girls and women in order to achieve universal access to sanitary products to the most vulnerable women and girls. In South Africa, 26% of women aged 9-49 years live below the food poverty line. Therefore the priority persons who will benefit from the implementation of this Framework are indigent women and girls who have reached puberty, commenced menstruation and who:

1. attend schools ranked at quintile 1, 2 and 3, special needs schools and farm schools. The option of expanding to quintiles 4 and 5 will be based on the results of a needs assessment and availability of resources;
2. attend Post-School Education and Training institutions[[1]](#footnote-1);
3. live in child-headed households;
4. have been admitted to any state-owned institutions, hospitals, orphanages, places of care, prisons and places of safety;
5. vulnerable indigent women and girls not in State Institutions.
6. have been identified by an Indigent Sanitary Management Committee (ISMC) or Provincial Sanitary Dignity Committee (PSDC), provided that the relevant ISMC or PSDC must submit a motivation to the Sanitary Dignity Oversight Committee (SDOC) for the inclusion of such persons as beneficiaries of this Framework and such persons may only be provided with sanitary products if so, approved by the SDOC.

DWYPD leads the implementation of the Framework with the support and guidance of the multi-sectoral government national task team. DWYPD has participated the following interventions:

1. The implementation of the framework is a phased in approach and has started with girls in quintiles 1-3 schools. DWYPD submitted a request to National Treasury for the 19/20 financial year to pilot the sanitary dignity implementation framework in quintiles 1-3 schools. The National Treasury made an allocation of R157 million through provincial equitable share to either the Department of Education or the Department of Social Development. The provinces are currently implementing the programmes and DWYPD is responsible for coordinating, monitoring and evaluation. An additional request has been made to National Treasury for the 2020 MTEF and consultations are underway.
2. Submission made to the independent panel of experts for Zero VAT on sanitary products by the Department with many other stakeholders ensured that sanitary pads and panty liners have been zero VAT rated since 1 April, 2019. Currently, the Department is investigating whether the VAT is being implemented and how it has changed the lives of women and girls.
3. Development of Standards for Water supply, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) March 2019. These standards were developed by the Water Research Commission and piloted in 10 schools in the Eastern Cape. The Department formed part of the team that developed the standards.
4. As part of advocacy and awareness raising, DWYPD held a National Launch of the Sanitary Dignity Programme in Mkhondo Local Municipality in Mpumalanga on 28 February 2019, as well as Provincial launches in Eastern Cape in Makana Local Municipality on 13 April 2019 and E-Thekwini Metro on 3 May 2019. During these events girls were provided with the sanitary towels.
5. The DWYPD has partnered with various government partners, development partners, private sector companies and non-profit organisations who have supplied sanitary pads, education sessions on menstrual health and WASH. These partnerships are continuous.
6. Development of standards for the reusable pads. The Department participates in the technical working group on norms and standards. The group is led by the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS). The standards were published for public comments on 25 July 2019 and closed on 25 September, 2019.
1. For example, Technical Vocation Education and Training Colleges as registered under the Continuing Education and Training Act, 2006 (Act No. 16 of 2006). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)