



**MINISTRY  
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Private Bag X645, Pretoria, 0001. Tel: (012) 421 1309, Fax: (012) 341 8513  
Private Bag X9029, Cape Town, 8000. Tel (021) 466 7603, Fax: (021) 466 3610

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER: 6814 (NW7612E)**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION: 14 NOVEMBER 2025**

**QUESTION:**

**6814. Mr T I Gamede (MK) to ask the Minister of Human Settlements:**

(1) Given the increasing frequency and severity of climate-related disasters such as floods and droughts, which disproportionately affect vulnerable informal settlements, what is the comprehensive, long-term strategy of her department to integrate climate change adaptation and environmental sustainability into the core of human settlements planning;

(2) what are the details of the plan of her department to move beyond reactive disaster management and temporary relocation and begin to proactively implement ecologically sound development models such as (a) nature-based solutions, (b) managed retreat and (c) the formalisation of settlements *in situ*, with full environmental impact assessments to ensure that all human settlements are genuinely resilient and do not exacerbate environmental degradation for future generations? NW7612E

**REPLY:**

- (1) The Department of Human Settlements has adopted a comprehensive, long-term approach to integrating climate change adaptation and environmental sustainability into human settlements planning. This approach is embedded within the Department's policy, planning, and funding frameworks and is informed by national climate resilience priorities.

Central to this approach is the prioritisation of climate-resilient settlement planning through proactive spatial planning, risk-informed decision-making, and the alignment of human settlements development with environmental legislation and climate adaptation objectives. The Department promotes the identification and prioritisation of vulnerable settlements—particularly informal settlements exposed to floods, droughts, and geotechnical risks—within provincial and metropolitan planning instruments and annual business plans.

To give effect to this, the Department utilises targeted conditional grants, notably the Informal Settlements Upgrading Partnership Grant (ISUPG), to support both in-situ upgrading and permanent relocation interventions, while ensuring compliance with environmental sustainability and climate resilience principles.

Considering that most informal settlements in the country are located on disaster prone areas such as wetlands, flood lines and sinkholes, the National Department of Human Settlements introduced the Informal Settlements Upgrading Partnership Grant (ISUPG) as a conditional grant that is dedicated to address in-situ upgrading and permanent relocation of informal settlements. Therefore, to mitigate the recurrence of disasters such as floods in these settlements, the affected provinces and metropolitan municipalities need to proactively prioritise such settlements in their annual business plans.

- (2) In moving beyond reactive disaster response and temporary relocation, the Department's approach is centred on proactive, planned, and environmentally responsible settlement development, as follows:

**(a) Nature-based and risk-responsive interventions:**

The Department promotes settlement upgrading and development models that reduce environmental vulnerability and strengthen resilience, including appropriate land-use planning, drainage management, and environmental rehabilitation measures. Provinces and metropolitan

municipalities are required to prioritise high-risk settlements in their planning and funding submissions to mitigate recurring climate-related impacts.

**(b) Managed retreat and permanent relocation:**

Where informal settlements are located in high-risk or environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, floodplains, sinkholes, or unstable land, provinces and metropolitan municipalities are mandated to implement permanent relocation in line with approved relocation plans. These interventions are funded through relevant conditional grants, including the Human Settlements Development Grant (HSDG), Urban Settlements Development Grant (USDG), and ISUPG, and must comply with the conditions of the Division of Revenue Act (DoRA).

**(c) In-situ formalisation supported by environmental assessments:**

For settlements suitable for in-situ upgrading, the Department requires environmental screening as a minimum requirement. Where triggered by legislation, full Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) are conducted to ensure compliance with environmental laws and long-term sustainability. This approach ensures that upgraded settlements are resilient to climate risks, do not exacerbate environmental degradation, and contribute to intergenerational equity. Community participation is incorporated into the environmental assessment processes to ensure that local knowledge informs mitigation measures and strengthens ownership of outcomes.

Through these measures, the Department is progressively transitioning towards climate-resilient, environmentally sustainable human settlements that are planned, implemented, and managed in a manner that safeguards both current and future generations.