



**MINISTRY
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NUMBER: 7411 (NW8278E)

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QUESTION:

7411. Mr T I Gamede (MK) to ask the Minister of Human Settlements:

(1) In light of the growing surge in informal settlements and the increasing threat of climate-related disasters such as floods and droughts disproportionately affecting the vulnerable communities, what comprehensive, multi-year and fully-funded national strategy will her department implement to accelerate the in-situ upgrading of informal settlements, focusing on the provision of basic services, secure tenure and climate-resilient infrastructure;

(2) whether she has taken any steps to engage the National Treasury to ensure that the equitable allocation of municipal infrastructure grants is directly tied to the performance of local governments in achieving measurable milestones for informal settlement upgrading and the maintenance of bulk infrastructure, thereby ensuring that the most vulnerable populations are not left behind in the pursuit of sustainable human settlements? NW8278E

REPLY:

1. The Department of Human Settlements has developed a Climate Change Response Strategy and Implementation Plan (CCRS&IP), which is currently undergoing the requisite internal governance and approval processes. The CCRS&IP is intended to safeguard vulnerable Human Settlements – both formal and informal - against the risks and impacts of climate change and climate variability. The development of the Strategy responds to the requirements of the Climate Change Act (2024), which requires all departments responsible climate-vulnerable sectors to prepare, implement and report on climate change response plans to the Minister of Environment.

The Department recognises the urgent need to address the surge in informal settlements and the increasing vulnerability of communities to climate-related disasters such as floods and droughts. To this end, the Department is implementing a comprehensive Mid-Term Development Plan (MTDP) to accelerate the in-situ upgrading of informal settlements that also includes the reblocking process. The Mid-Term Development Plan is anchored in the Upgrading of Informal Settlements Programme (UISP) and aligned with the National Climate Change Response Policy. Key elements include:

- Provision of basic services: Ensuring access to water, sanitation, electricity, and stormwater management systems in upgraded settlements.
- Secure tenure: Formalising land rights through incremental tenure arrangements, thereby providing legal certainty and enabling long-term investment in communities.
- Climate-resilient infrastructure: Embedding climate risk assessments into settlement planning and incorporating resilient design standards such as flood-resistant housing, green infrastructure, and energy-efficient technologies.
- Integrated planning: Coordinating with municipalities, provinces, and other departments to ensure that upgrading projects are embedded in broader spatial development frameworks and disaster risk reduction strategies.
- This multi-year approach is supported by dedicated funding stream within the Informal Settlements Upgrading Partnership Grant (ISUPG) ensuring that resources are ring-fenced for upgrading projects with measurable outcomes.

2. Overview of the key aspects of the draft Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan for the CCRS sets out the priority interventions for each of the priority and cross cutting areas (seven in total) for the 2024 to 2030 period, and highlights the leading and enabling role-players, including funding sources. Importantly, the Plan establishes the relationship between each priority action area, and the cross-cutting climate change interventions. Other key aspects of the Plan are the following:

1. Map out ecosystem services that need to be preserved or rehabilitated to safeguard human settlements.
2. Outline the long-term expansion plan for South Africa's most vulnerable human settlements using critical ecosystem services as an anchor.
3. Map out arterial roads and services networks and planting of trees, prioritising disadvantaged communities that face severe heat stress.
4. Co-develop context appropriate early warning systems and disaster risk responses with affected communities and their support institutions.
5. Conduct assessments on high-risk sites, to include a study of alternatives to involuntary displacement as well as effective economic solutions, to ensure that the displacement of people only occurs in specific cases such as if the intervention is critical for climate resilient infrastructure projects, ensures safe housing, eliminates hazardous risk factors, and protects critical environmental conservation areas. Include mapping of high-risk climate events, such as floods and landslides, and the potential impact thereof, for at risk communities.
6. Develop a plan for resettlement and measures to ensure that affected people are offered just and adequate solutions to offset the displacement. These plans must be approved by the relevant Local Authority.
7. Promote "Re-blocking" in established informal areas. This involves the rearranging of the location of shacks, with important ecosystem services at the fore, to create open spaces, access roads for emergency vehicles, routes for essential services such as water and sanitation.

Promote Re-blocking of densely populated informal settlements by restructuring settlement layouts to improve access to roads, emergency services, and bulk infrastructure, while reducing overcrowding and enhancing resilience to climate shocks.

8. Geo-mapping of informal settlements using spatial data and digital mapping tools to identify settlement patterns, risk exposure, and service gaps, thereby enabling evidence-based planning and prioritisation.
9. Prioritising informal settlements in disaster-prone areas by directing resources and interventions to communities most exposed to floods, droughts, and other climate-related risks, ensuring that vulnerable populations receive urgent attention in upgrading programmes.