

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 24

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 20 MARCH 2008
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO 10)

24. Ms D Robinson to ask the Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry:

- (1) Whether, in light of the Auditor-General's report on the performance audit of her department's provision of sanitation, she is planning to take any action to correct the more than 75% vacancy rate in most provincial departments; if not, why not; if so, what action;
- (2) whether she plans to address the inadequate funding available to local governments through the municipal infrastructure grant (MIG) for sanitation services; if not, why not; if so, (a) how will she address this and (b) when?

CW1147E

---00000---

REPLY:

- (1) Yes, Action has already been taken. The Auditor-General's report, titled "Performance Audit carried out on the Provision of Sanitation Services at the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry." June 2007 indicates a 77% vacancy rate of sanitation personnel at seven out of nine Department of Water Affairs and Forestry's (DWAF) Regional Offices.

It is important to note that implementation of sanitation projects takes place at local government level. The role of my Department is to provide support where required and to ensure that standards set within the current policy framework are adhered to. Given capacity challenges faced by local government, my Department has developed and approved the new organisational structure for all nine provincial offices. My Department will be approaching National Treasury to access funding to fill in these new vacant posts. However, a process of prioritisation has been undertaken and the most critical posts that are linked to pressing needs of service delivery were identified and given priority in terms of funding. The process of filling the vacant posts in the regions has started, many of the vacant posts have been advertised and some have already been filled. By the end of June 2008 all funded sanitation posts at regional level will be filled and the sanitation units will be headed by a person of not lower than a level of Deputy Director in each regional office.

- (2) Yes, I am aware that the portion of Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) budget allocated to sanitation through MIG formula is not adequate. A process has commenced to ring fence the sanitation budget within MIG. A Cabinet Memorandum (Cab Memo) has been drafted to make Cabinet aware of the resolution taken at the Africa San +5 Conference in February 2008 held in Durban, where African Ministers committed themselves to increase sanitation budget to 0,5% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) allocation. My department is working closely with Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) and National Treasury (NT) to have this addressed during the next MTEF.