

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

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QUESTION NO 61

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★61. Ms P Bhengu (ANC) to ask the Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry:

Whether the target set for the eradication of the bucket sanitation system in the informal areas was achieved by the target date of December 2007; if not, why not; if so, which provinces remained challenged in realising the target set? NO880E

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REPLY:

For the purpose of this reply, it is important that Honourable Members are aware of the distinction between the removal of the bucket system in established formal settlements and the target date set for its eradication and the removal of the bucket sanitation system in the areas where there are informal settlements. It is also important for this House to note the progress we have made in restoring dignity by eradicating the bucket sanitation system.

Formal established settlements

The bucket sanitation system replacement programme that is led by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) is focusing on buckets that are in established formal settlements that were in existence prior to 1994.

The programme commenced in February 2005 and was to be completed within a period of three years. When the programme started it was addressing buckets systems in both formal and informal areas. In his State of the Nation Address in February 2006, the President announced, however, that all buckets in established settlements had to be eradicated by December 2007.

In February 2005 the bucket sanitation backlog in established formal settlements was 252 254 buckets and most of them were in

the Free State, Eastern Cape, North West, Northern Cape, Mpumalanga and Gauteng.

A budget of R1,2 billion was allocated to the programme in the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) period as follows:

- 2005/06: R200 million;
- 2006/07: R400 million; and
- 2007/08: R600 million.

An additional budget of R600 million was allocated to the programme in 2007 to address the budget shortfall. Therefore the total budget for the programme was R1,8 billion.

At the end of December 2007 the remaining backlog in established formal settlements was 49 010 buckets out of the initial backlog of 252 254 buckets. This means that about 81% of buckets in formal established settlements had been replaced with appropriate sanitation at the end of December 2007.

Only three provinces could not meet the target date of December 2007 in established formal settlements, namely Free State, Eastern Cape and Northern Cape. These provinces could not meet the target due to the following reasons:

- Excavation in hard rock conditions which significantly slowed down the delivery rate.
- Non-availability of bulk infrastructure.
- Lack of water resources to support the replacement of buckets.
- Shortage of building material due to the huge increase of infrastructural projects in the country.
- Excessive rains experienced towards the end of year 2007.
- Lack of absorption capacity of some municipalities to implement such a huge programme with so tight timeframes.
- Shortage of experienced contractors.

At the end of February 2008 the bucket backlog in established formal settlements was 40 430 buckets in the last mentioned three provinces. All remaining buckets in established formal settlements will be removed by the end of March 2008. However, there will be a challenge of sufficient water supply in some municipalities and that some bulk infrastructure might need to be upgraded to cater for additional load e.g. Kareeberg Municipality in the Northern Cape.

The Department is continuing to support municipalities that are finishing up their programmes to ensure that all buckets in established formal settlements are removed by the end of March 2008.

Informal established settlements

As far as the removal of the bucket sanitation systems in the informal settlements are concerned, the approach of government is to ensure that people who are currently living in informal settlements will be provided with access to basic services, which includes houses, water, sanitation and electricity. The target date for them to receive these services is 2014 as announced by the President during the State of the Nation Address on 8th February 2008.