



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MINISTRY OF WATER AND
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

2011 -03- 14

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Reference: 2/1/5/1

MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: QUESTION 196 FOR WRITTEN REPLY

A draft reply to the above-mentioned question asked by Mrs H N Ndude (Cope); is attached for your consideration.

ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL

DATE: 11/02/2011

DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED

MRS B E E MOLEWA, MP
MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

DATE: 25/03/11

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 196

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 10 FEBRUARY 2011
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 01)

196. Mrs H N Ndude (Cope) to ask the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs:

- (1) Whether any studies have been conducted into children's exposure to lead poisoning especially within their home environments; if not, why not; if so;
- (2) whether she has any plans in place to deal with this issue; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

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REPLY:

- (1) According to our information, neither the Department nor the Water Research Commission conducted such a study. From a drinking water quality perspective such a study was not considered due to the low risk of lead contamination in the water supply. Bulk and reticulation infrastructure is not lead-based nor would be any of the treatment chemicals used in the purification process. The probability of this risk could only become relevant in very old domestic plumbing where lead piping could have been used. This would then present the probability of moderate lead contamination due to corrosion. Since this probable occurrence is beyond the point of delivery, it would be outside of the Water Service Provisioning function but become a Primary Health issue.
- (2) No. The International Drinking Water Quality Regulation partners such as the Drinking Water Inspectorate (UK) conducted studies with regards to lead in drinking water. These results can be used to inform local standards and decision making regarding the drinking water quality management. With regards to the Domestic Health issue, this could be referred to the Department of Health to investigate infant exposure to lead residue from the various lead-based materials in and around the home environment. Local research can be further augmented by consulting studies conducted by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the extensive literature of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (*Final Review of Scientific Information on Lead; December 2010*).

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