Official reply:10 May 2017

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

Date of publication on internal question paper: 03 March 2017

Internal question paper no: 07

**401. Mrs K Jooste (DA) to ask the Minister of Social Development:**

Whether her department uses poverty line(s) for planning purposes; if not, why not; if so, (a) which poverty line(s) is or are used and (b) what are the further relevant details in this regard? **NW454E**

**Reply:**

Yes, theDepartment considers the following three poverty lines developed by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA).

**Food poverty line:** the Rand value below which individuals are unable to consume enough food to supply them with minimum per-person-per-day energy requirements for good health (about 2 100 kilocalories) per capita per month.

**Lower-bound poverty line***:* stipulates the threshold below which one has to sacrifice some food to obtain some basic non-food items. It is a sum of the FPL and the average amount derived from non-food items of households whose total expenditure is equal to the food poverty line; and

**Upper-bound poverty line:** the unambiguous threshold of relative deprivation below which people cannot afford the minimum lifestyle desired by most South Africans. It is a sum of the FPL and the average amount derived from non-food items of households whose food expenditure is equal to the food poverty line.

Based on the national poverty lines above, data from Stats SA shows that between the period 2006 and 2011, there was a decline in poverty levels in the country for all three lines. The proportion of the population living below a food poverty line decreased from 28.4% in 2006 to 21.7% in 2011 whilst the proportion living below the lower bound poverty line decreased from 51.0% 2006 to 37.0% in 2011 and with regards to the upper bound poverty line, the proportion declined from 66.6% in 2006 to 53.8% in 2011.

A report entitled Poverty Trends in South Africa: An examination of absolute poverty between 2006 and 2011 attributed the main source of decline in poverty to social wage package through services such as free primary health care, no-fee paying schools and school nutrition programme, social grants (most notably the Old Age and Child Support Grants, RDP housing and the provision of basic services to poor households namely water, electricity and sanitation.