# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTENREPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 1278**

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**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 13)**

**Mr W M Madisha (Cope) to ask the Minister of Health:**

With reference to his statement on 4 March 2017 regarding the listeriosis outbreak (details furnished) and the state of the municipal environmental health services, what (a) number of municipalities are currently providing municipal environmental health services and (b) steps does the Government intend taking to improve the state of municipal environmental health services?

###### NW1378E

**REPLY:**

(a) All 52 Metropolitan and District Municipalities are currently providing municipal/environmental health services. Municipalities are however all understaffed and underresourced to efficiently and effectively service the current population and the increasing number of business premises (formal and informal);

(b) The Department of Health has published and gazetted National Environmental Health Norms and Standards, 2015 ( Gazette No 39561 of 24 December 2015, Notice 1229 of 2015). Theaim of these Norms and standards is to promote and ensure compliance to environmental health related policies/legislation and to provide a national approach in standardizing activities in the delivery of Environmental Health Services and establish a level against which the delivery can be assessed and gaps identified. Municipalities are being audited annually since 2016/2017 against compliance with these Norms and Standards and are individually being assisted to improve their compliance thereto.

For optimal output and meaningful management that will improve service delivery, the Ministry of Health intends to request Cabinet to approve that Municipal Health Services be managed from the National Department of Health directly with a restructured system from National to Municipality and/or through controlling the allocation of resources especially budget that gets allocated to Municipalities to an extent that Municipalities will account directly to the Ministry. This will assist to monitor and enable the Ministry of Health to account on environmental health service delivery in the Country. Alternatively, and best still, is to change the law and have Environmental Health Practitioners (what used to be called Health Inspectors), to be directly hired by the Department of Health rather than municipalities.

END.