**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY QUESTION NUMBER: 3698**

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**3698. Ms P Marais (EFF) to ask the Minister of Social Development:**

Following the assessment conducted in the Free State, which shows that children younger than five years are dying due to malnutrition, what steps of intervention has she taken to completely eradicate malnutrition? NW4528E

**REPLY:**

Social Development provides support in the rehabilitation phase of treatment for children referred to the Department after discharge from inpatient care as well as those referred from outpatient treatment to access various social security interventions to promote recovery. However, we support the preventative interventions to reduce malnutrition cases.

Some of the preventive interventions implemented by the Department of Social Development in collaboration with the Department of Health include: improving access to high-quality foods through food relief distribution and access to health care; improving nutrition and health knowledge through training and capacity building of practitioners and centres personnel; effectively promoting exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of a child’s life where appropriate; promoting improved complementary feeding practices for all children aged 6–24 months — with a focus on ensuring access to age-appropriate complementary foods (where possible using locally available foods); and improving hygiene practices to protect children against communicable diseases.

Among the other key factors that contributes to deaths in children admitted in health facilities with severe acute malnutrition includes: delay in seeking care and children who present with other complications namely diarrhoea and pneumonia.

Furthermore, kindly provide us with more information regarding the assessment conducted as referred to in the question for referral to our Health counterparts to profile the affected families so that we can provide comprehensive response to the affected area.