# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 3859**

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**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 42)**

**Ms D Carter (Cope) to ask the Minister of Health:**

Whether his department facilitated any joint meetings with food manufacturers, nutritionists and medical scientists with a view of discussing changes needed to be undertaken in food manufacturing to help stem the tide of obesity and life style diseases which are overwhelming the health system; if not, why not; if so, what agreement was reached with (a) food manufacturers that would significantly help to improve the nutritional quality and health giving properties of manufactured or processed foods and (b) nutritionists and medical scientists to evaluate manufactured and processed foods with a view of providing an easy to understand rating system that would appear on food labels?

###### NW4669E

**REPLY:**

Yes.

Agreements reached with food manufacturers -

1. The Department of Health is working closely with the Consumer Goods Council of South Africa (CGCSA), which is an organization where various groups of the food industry are affiliated. Through this collaboration the food industry have committed to support the drive by Government to reduce the prevalence of Obesity. The need to reformulate some food products was identified as one of the priority areas. In this regard, it is imperative to identify the ultra processed, frequently consumed foods in South Africa and to do this. the CGCSA and the International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI) South Africa, have commissioned a Dietary Intake Study which aims to identify these foods and beverages to target them for reformulation.

Furthermore, the Department promulgated the regulations relating to reduction of sodium in certain foodstuffs and related matters (R214) in 2013. It is stipulated in the Regulations, that as of 2016, there should be reduction of sodium content in various foodstuffs until the desired nutrient levels are reached in 2019.

1. The Department of Health also collaborates with the Food Legislation Advisory Group (FLAG) which comprise of the industry, academia, research institutes and nutrition professional bodies. This collaboration has resulted in the development of a Nutrient Profile Model (NPM) for South Africa to provide a scientific evidence-based approach to determine the eligibility of foods to carry nutrient and health claims on their labels in South Africa. This Nutrient Profile calculator is a user-friendly electronic tool which has been made available to assist manufacturers on the formulation of new products or reformulation of their products where necessary and when they intend to make health or nutrition claims.

END.