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| MEMORANDUM FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY OFFICE |

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 1415**

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**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO 14 OF 2021**

**Ms H Ismail (DA) to ask the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation:**

(1) Whether, with regard to university system and partnerships with Multinational Pharma groups and COVID-19 and that the Ministerial Advisory Committee has leading academics conducting trials with global multinational corporations (MNCs), there is a framework when Higher Education is publicly funded to engage with global corporations; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, will he furnish Ms H Ismail with the framework;

(2) what is the breakdown of the funding allocation for the trials led by Government and MNCs;

(3) whether (a) Astra Zeneca and (b) Johnson and Johnson pay our university system or patent knowledge? **NW1612E**

**REPLY:**

1. The clinical trials referred to in this context are often funded by philanthropic groups, international product development partnerships, other governments (such as US funds for the HIV Vaccine **Trials Network** (**HVTN**)). Multinational corporations (MNC) generally make a contribution by providing the study product for free in the clinical trial, and fund the trials in some countries. Public funds in South Africa are generally used as a contribution to focus attention on the South African-specific situation (e.g. efficacy/safety in HIV-infected individuals), to ensure clinical data is obtained to ensure regulatory compliance in South Africa. Funding allocation for health R&D is informed by the objectives and priorities of the Bio-Economy Strategy.
2. The Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) contributed R4,5 million towards the ChAdOx1 trial (AstraZeneca vaccine) to ensure that HIV positive persons were enrolled in the clinical trial, as this is a particular need within the South African environment. In addition, the DSI contributed an amount of R1 million towards the use of local clinical trial sites for the World Health Organization Global Solidarity Trial.
3. The clinical trials referred to above generally do not result in new intellectual property (IP) as the purpose is to obtain safety and efficacy data on an existing product (owned by the MNC). If, in the unlikely event that IP is developed, the Intellectual Property from Publicly Financed Research and Development Act applies in South Africa (i.e. if the research is not paid at full cost, this will result in IP ownership by the university conducting the work. In such circumstances the product owner/MNC often gets some rights in terms of either co-ownership or first rights to license the IP).