# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 1522**

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**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 15)**

**Mrs M O Clarke (DA) to ask the Minister of Health:**

With regard to the administrative problems of his department failing to properly and/or timeously review the curricula of foreign medical institutions for the purposes of registering as a medical professional in the Republic, despite such institutions appearing on the list of World Directory of Medical Schools and the qualifications being verified and authenticated by the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates, what (a) systems and/or processes will his department be implementing to streamline the process to ensure smooth transition for foreign graduates and (b) is the timeline involved for the implementation of the systems and/or processes? **NW1765E**

**REPLY:**

The World Directory of Medical Schools is a product of partnerships between the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) and the Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research (FAIMER) a member of Intealth. These organizations do not control nor monitor training at medical schools.

The WFME is a global organization concerned with education and training of medical practitioners. It is a private non-profit organization developed to share ideas on education and training of medical doctors among between institutions, who wish to do so. It does not regulate the standards of education and training of practitioners across the world. The listing of qualifications in the World Directory of Medical Schools does not imply that the standard of training is assessed for comparability; neither does it confer portability of a qualification across international borders for the purposes of practicing medicine.

The Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) is a regulatory body, which has a mandate of protecting the interests of the public in the Republic of South Africa. The HPCSA, is empowered by section 15B (c ) of the Health Professions Act to: “upon application by any person, recognize any qualification held by him or her (whether such qualification has been obtained in the Republic or elsewhere) as being equal, either wholly or in part, to any prescribed qualification, where upon such a person shall, to the extent to which the qualification has been recognized, be deemed to halt such prescribed qualification’’.

The HPCSA through its relevant board (The Medical and Dental Professions Board) controls the entry into the labour market of all who wish to practice medicine and related disciplines in the country (South Africa). When the HPCSA grants a license for an individual to practice medicine under its jurisdiction, it implies that such an individual is deemed competent to enter the profession.

The challenge arises when a prospective registrant presents a qualification obtained from a foreign country. The HPCSA has no mechanism of quality assuring medical training in foreign jurisdictions. The only means and process which comes close to evaluating the training environment and the standard of a qualification is to scrutinize the documents submitted by a potential registrant.

This provides limited information about the standard of training obtained in foreign countries. The evaluators can only attempt to infer from the limited information they have at their disposal as to what level of competency the qualification confers on the holder. It can be expected that other regulators around the world face similar challenges when they are presented with similar situations.

To get around these problems, the South African Qualification Authorities (SAQA) and quality assurance bodies have developed an outcomes-based approach in describing abilities conferred by qualifications on the holders. There are other countries around the world such as the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and many other European Union countries, which have adopted the same system of describing their programmes, degrees, and qualifications. “Learning outcomes are statements of what a student is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completion of a process of learning” (ECTS Users Guide, p 47).

1. The current implemented systems and/or processes of streamline the process to ensure smooth transition for foreign graduates/ graduates trained outside the republic of South Africa is working well and is not being changed nor replaced.
2. The HPCSA is committed to a turnaround time of 90 days to finalise an evaluation of each programme received. Where the need arises, additional meetings by the Programme Evaluation Team can be arranged to avoid unwanted delays.

END.