**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**FRIDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER 2020**

**DUE DATE: 18 SEPTEMBER 2020**

**2062. Mr N Singh (IFP) to ask the President of the Republic:**

Whether, given the high demand for skilled medical professionals in the Republic, the small number of available seats at the South African tertiary institutions to train medical professionals, the current dire plight of South African foreign qualified medical doctors in obtaining accreditation through the Health Professions Council of South Africa, after having been forced to seek professional medical qualifications outside the Republic and the oral reply of the Minister of Health to question 379 on 2 September 2020 offering little chance of a resolution, he will intervene and instruct that an urgent meeting be convened between all interested parties in the hope of reaching an amicable and prompt resolution of the matter; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

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**REPLY**

There is a high demand for skilled medical professionals in South Africa, as there is in most countries globally.

To address this problem, Government has, among other interventions, ensured the expansion of the training platform in South African medical schools and has increased the number of doctors graduating from South African universities.

Additionally, Government also increased the intake of students studying medicine within the Nelson Mandela-Fidel Castro Programme (NMFC), through an agreement between the Republic of South Africa and the Republic of Cuba. The programme has since added a total of 2,498 medical doctors to our health workforce in the public health sector, and is expected to add a further 649 by January 2021.

With reference to the “*South African foreign qualified medical doctors”*referred to by the Honourable Member*,* I am advised thatthis concerns citizens who hold foreign qualifications, are not registered as medical practitioners under a foreign registering authority, have not completed training as interns and therefore are not meeting all requirements for registration.

In other words, these citizens are foreign-qualified medical graduates. They are not registered as medical practitioners or doctors in the countries where they have received their medical education.

To assist these medical graduates to get clinical exposure and to complete training as interns, the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) on 24 June 2020 approved the pathway that was referred to in the oral reply of the Minister of Health to Question 379 on 2 September 2020.

I am advised by the Minister of Health that the HPCSA Pathway is in line with the 2018 Policy Guidelines issued by the National Department of Health.

This will assist citizens who are qualified outside South Africa and are not, or were not, registered with a foreign registering authority and have not completed training as interns with a smooth integration into the South African healthcare system.

In view of the above, there is no need for my intervention.