# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 2648**

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**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 29)**

**Ms S P Kopane (DA) to ask the Minister of Health:**

(1) Whether his department has taken any steps to reduce the increasingly high levels of air pollution in the country in order to limit the negative effect of (a) ambient and (b) indoor air pollution on the health of citizens; if not, in each case, why not; if so, what are the relevant details in each case;

(2) whether his department has put any policies in place to mitigate the negative effect of the increasingly high levels of (a) ambient and (b) indoor air pollution on citizen’s health; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

###### NW2937E

**REPLY:**

(1) (a) Ambient air pollution

Ambient Air Pollution in the country is legislated by the National Management: Air Quality Act No. 39 of 2004 under the Department of Environmental Health Affairs. In ensuring the compliance with the requirements of the National Environmental Management Act, No. 62 of 2008 (NEMA), Part 2, Section (1) (a), all health facilities in the country are no longer utilizing own incinerators within health facilities for disposal of Health Care Risk Waste/medical waste. Currently waste is collected by a service provider who disposes in licensed incinerators. The Department remains with a responsibility to ensure that the cradle to grave principle on management of such waste generated by the Department is adhered to.

Some health facilities are utilizing solar energy to heat water for use in hospitals rather than using the boiler houses which utilize coals and pollute the atmosphere. Bertha Gxowa hospital in Gauteng province is an example that has implemented this and other hospitals are benchmarking.

(b) Indoor air pollution

A Domestic Indoor Air Quality Guideline has been developed to guide municipal health services (environmental health services in municipalities) in addressing indoor air quality. It has been reviewed and in the process of being approved. Activities conducted as per the Guideline are as follows:

* Create awareness to people at risk on Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) risks
* Provide guidance in undertaking indoor air pollutants assessments in a domestic environment (surveillance of premises)
* Support IAQ monitoring as part of Air Quality Management Plans/Programmes
* Support air quality health research studies
* Give the ability and/or capacity to respond to IAQ complaints
* To incorporate the behavioural change strategies as a potential to reduce indoor air pollution exposure

(2) (a) and (b)

Yes.

The legislation available for responding to air pollution in the department are as follows:

* The Constitution in Section 24, 27 and 28 which refers to the basic human rights.
* National Health Act 61 of 2003 as amended, outlines the role of provincial health to ensure that there is provision of environmental pollution control services. provision of health services, including preventative health care service.
* Scope of Profession for Environmental Health in terms of Health Professions Act 56 of 1974, lists environmental health functions conducted by Environmental Health Practitioners in relation to air quality monitoring includes environmental pollution control and health surveillance of premises.
* National Environment Management: Air Quality Act, No. 39 of 2004 – Regulates air quality activities, promote clean air to ensure protection of the environment and human health.
* The Draft National Air Pollution Strategy (DEA), 2017 map outlines the path that the country needs to take in reducing the impact of air pollution in dense law income communities which includes role of the Department of Health.

The above legislation continues to be implemented as part of the scope of practice for environmental health services rendered within district and metropolitan municipalities which outlines clear roles on protection of the communities regarding ambient air pollution.

A Domestic Indoor Air Quality guideline has been developed to guide municipal health services (Environmental Health Services in municipalities) in addressing indoor air quality which is aligned to the WHO guideline for indoor air quality.

END.