**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**FRIDAY, 6 NOVEMBER 2020**

**DUE DATE: 20 NOVEMBER 2020**

**2654. Ms N V Mente (EFF) to ask the President of the Republic:**

Whether, since the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) released a report on the forced sterilisation of HIV-positive women, he has held any meeting(s) with the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities to determine their actioned response to the CGE Report; if not, why not, since he has continuously declared gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) a pandemic and it is actually pandemics such as GBFV that demand concomitant action; if so, what are the relevant details including (a) the date on which the meeting(s) took place, (b) who participated in the meeting(s), (c) what was the determined response and (d) what is the current status? NW3369E

**REPLY**

The report of the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) on the forced sterilisation of HIV positive women is deeply concerning and we condemn in the strongest terms the violation of all human rights, including the rights of people living with HIV.

The issue of the sterilisation of HIV positive women was handled directly by the National Department of Health and the CGE and reports have been submitted by the Department to the CGE.

Interventions to prevent the recurrence of the alleged coerced procedures include the revision of the policy on sterilisations, revision of the informed consent form (including translating the form into all official languages) and the inclusion of the informed consent form as part of the standard maternity record.

The National Department of Health has also appointed an independent obstetrician to review the hospital records of each patient cited in the report and to provide an opinion on each case.

The matter of sterilisation in the form of tubal ligations is a health competence and there is a continuous interaction between the National Department of Health and the CGE.

I am confident that the Department of Health has the necessary competence to address this problem.