# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 2982**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 04 DECEMBER 2020**

**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 51)**

**Ms P P Dyantyi (ANC) to ask the Minister of Health:**

With reference to the issue of personal protective equipment (PPEs) which came under the spotlight in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, what (a) actions and/or measures has he and/or his department taken to address the (i) availability, (ii) quantity and (iii) quality of PPEs and (b) role has the relationship between his department and the labour unions played to improve the situation and to ensure that frontline healthcare workers, including community health workers, are well protected against the pandemic?

###### NW3810E

**REPLY:**

1. Actions and/or measures has he and/or his department taken to address the

1. Availability of PPEs

The National Department of Health developed an Infection Control and Prevention (IPC) Guideline that identifies in detail what PPEs are required in by health care and support personnel require in the different health care service delivery settings. This document formed the basis of determining what PPE’s and in what quantity each health care worker and support personnel will require.

1. Quantity of PPEs

The IPC Guidelines informed the PPE demand forecast, initially projected for a 6-month period and subsequently the PPE forecast was projected until March 2021. The PPE demand forecast projections are utilised to identify resources required to procure PPEs, finalise transversal contracts with National Treasury, secure and negotiate availability of PPEs with suppliers.

A PPE module was also added to the stock visibility system (SVS) used to monitor medicines. This enabled health facilities and depots in provinces to report PPE stock on hand against forecasted demand and identify shortfalls and surpluses. The SVS system is used by provinces to monitor PPE availability and to address shortfalls at a health facility level.

1. Quality of PPEs

The National Department of Health in collaboration with South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA), the National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS) sets the quality standards for the various personal protective equipment items. Each province is responsible for ensuring that the quality standards of PPE’s procured are maintained.

The National department of Health has also supported the provinces with availing a Policy on Respiratory Protective Equipment and a list of PPE specifications that provinces can utilise to guide the PPE procurement process. In addition, PPE quality assurance training was conducted for provinces. The Department of Trade and Industry also provides support to local manufacturers and distributors in respect of compliance with applicable standards and conformity assessments to assist them to prepare for the licensing and approval process.

Meetings with provincial PPE coordinators, depot managers and PPE supply chain officials are convened bi-weekly to monitor and address availability, security of supply and quality assurance of PPE.

1. The labour unions participate in the weekly Project Management Office meetings chaired by the Director-General where updates are given on personal protective equipment (PPE) availability and quantity at facility level through analysis of data on the Stock Visibility System (SVS). The SVS also allows for access to trade union representatives to sign-off on the quantity of PPE at the facility level. I have convened meetings with the trade unions to update them on PPE availability and quantity. In addition, PPE and Occupational Health and Safety are standing agenda items on the Tech-NHC and NHC meetings.

END.