# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 2983**

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

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

In view of the important role that public-private partnerships have played in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, (a) are there any other initiatives that he and/or his department have to continue in co-operation with the public-private partnerships and (b) how will the co-operation be taken forward to achieve a unified healthcare system under the National Health Insurance?

###### NW3811E

**REPLY:**

1. The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated the need for a concerted societal response to design and implement innovative, quick and practical solutions to address the impact of the pandemic on the national health system. A key element of this response was the interactions between the public and private sector stakeholders of different kinds (most importantly private healthcare professionals) to collaborate with Government at various levels. This collaboration and open engagement allowed for some innovative solutions, such as the Private Laboratory network (22 Laboratories) agreeing to work with the National Health Laboratory system (27 Laboratories) to scale up testing capacity; the private health facilities availed their beds and ICUs for the management of cases; as well as establishing platforms for the coordination and sharing information with the private sector which was essential in monitoring ICU capacity and where additional patients could be referred particularly during periods of the pandemic peaks in some provinces.
2. The National Department of Health continues to cooperate and regularly engages the private health sector on a variety of matters pertaining to priority programmes for the sector. This engagement and cooperation will continue to be followed through as we make progress towards the implementation of National Health Insurance (NHI), through ensuring a coherent and sustainable plan as outlined in the White Paper on NHI and the NHI Bill. Some of the core areas for continued engagement with the private sector include how best to incorporate the skills and clinical insights of the private sector into both the primary and hospital-based health care services, the role to be played by the multidisciplinary district health teams; and the development and implementation of alternative reimbursement strategies. Equally important is the aspect of digital integration of private health information platforms into the Health Normative Standards for Interoperability with the systems that are being designed and implemented as part of the NHI Fund’s information system.

END.