# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 3408**

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**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 37)**

**Ms H Ismail (DA) to ask the Minister of Health:**

(1) What total number of vaccines have (a) expired and (b) been destroyed as a result of expiry, since the initial purchase of the vaccines;

(2) what is the breakdown of the total amount, including transport and storage fees, that it actually costs when a vaccine has expired and must be destroyed;

(3) what total amount has it cost the Government to date to destroy (a) Johnson & Johnson and (b) Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines due to the (i) specified vaccines reaching expiration dates and (ii) vials being unsealed? **NW4105E**

**REPLY:**

1. No vaccines have been destroyed as a result of expiry from the central storage managed by the National Department of Health.
2. When it becomes necessary to destroy vaccines due to expiry at the central storage level, there will be two cost elements resulting in a total cost per vial:

(i) Distribution from the central warehouse to the waste management sites:

Pfizer: R16.24 to R20.49 per vial of 6 doses - depending on the vaccine distributor.

J&J: R14.90 to R14.94 per vial of 5 doses - depending on the vaccine distributor.

(ii) Cost of destruction, which is estimated to be between R18 and R25 per kilogram.

Pfizer: A tray of 195 vials weighs approximately 1.2kg - therefore, R0.11 to R0.15 per vial  
J&J: A shipper of 480 vials weighs approximately 3kg - therefore, R0.11 to R0.16 per vial

(iii) Estimated total cost of destruction per vial:

Pfizer: R16.35 to R20.64 per vial of 6 doses  
J&J: R15.01 to R15.10 per vial of 5 doses.

1. (a)-(b) (i) Zero Rands in central storage. The province bears the cost of destroying expired vaccine doses at a facility level. The waste disposal is integrated into the normal waste disposal contracts and is generally costed by weight. It will be difficult to calculate the cost for vaccines only as the waste would include other medicines.

(ii) The province bears the cost of destroying opened vials. As these doses are disposed of together with the needle and syringes in yellow sharps containers (i.e. normal waste for any immunization programme) it is once again difficult to determine the cost for the vaccines alone as these vials, syringes, and needles will generally be mixed with other sharps disposed of at a facility level.

END.