**MINISTRY**

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION**

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY(NA)**

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**410. Mr M Hlengwa (IFP) to ask the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation:**

Whether there are any diplomatic discussions that South Africa has entered into with the Government of India as a result of the Oxford - AstraZeneca vaccine debacle; if not, why not; if so, what are the full, relevant details? MW 416 E

**REPLY**

Yes, The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation spoke to the Indian Minister of External Affairs on Monday, 1 February 2021, to convey the Government of South Africa’s profound appreciation to the Indian Authorities, after the arrival of the first vaccine shipment in the country from the Serum Institute of India.

Subsequent to the arrival of the AstraZeneca vaccine the South African Department of Health decided not to go ahead with the vaccination programme of the AstraZeneca vaccine due to clinical trial results showing that the vaccine 1s less effective In preventing mild and moderate symptoms associated with the 501Y.V2 variant of the virus that is more prevalent in South Africa. Instead the South African Department of Health decided to rather continue with the vaccination programme by using the Johnson & Johnson's vaccine that has shown better efficacy against the 501Y.V2 variant.

The South African High Commissioner to India, His Excellency, Mr J.S. Ndebsle spoka to the Indian Ministry of External Affairs regardlng the findings of the clinical trials and the resultant change in South Africa's vaccination programme. Tho High Commissioner is also scheduled to meet with the Ministry on Wednesday, 24 February 2021