**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 4576
DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 25 NOVEMBER 2022 (INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 50)

Dr S S Thembekwayo (EFF) to ask the Minister of Health:**
Whether he has considered not rushing the implementation of the National Health Insurance Bill and instead pay attention to the infrastructure challenges faced across the Republic; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details? NW5705E

**REPLY:**

The Department is not implementing the National Health Insurance (NHI) Bill in a rushed manner. The Department is following the provisions outlined in the approved 2017 NHI White Paper that provides for the NHI to be implemented in a phased manner. Section 309 of the White Paper provides for Health Systems Strengthening initiatives to continue being undertaken concurrently as the finalisation of the legislative process and the establishment of institutional arrangements for the NHI Fund are undertaken.

Furthermore, Clause 57 in the NHI Bill makes provision in the Transitional Arrangements where-in Clause 57 (1)(a) states that despite anything to the contrary the NHI must be implemented over two phases. Clause 57 (1)(b) states that National Health Insurance must be gradually phased in using a progressive and programmatic approach based on financial resource availability. Clause 57 (2) further provides health system’s strengthening initiatives such as addressing of infrastructure challenges to be undertaken during the transitional period.

It is indisputable that public hospitals do need infrastructure maintenance and investment. The Department quantified the anticipated cost at close to R200bn, which is clearly not going to be available in the short to medium term. There are nonetheless projects that are being attended to within the limits of available budget.

END.