

**MINISTRY**

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION**

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (NA)**

**Date of Publication: 24 April 2020**

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

Whether she intends to intervene and engage the Government of the People’s Republic of China on allegations of racism by persons and businesses of China that target Africans in relation to the spread of coronavirus; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details? **NW814E**

**REPLY:**

The Department of International Relations and Cooperation has engaged the Embassy of China and expressed grave concern over allegations of racism targeted at Africans in China during the current COVID-19 outbreak. It was made clear that South Africa abhors racism, prejudice and discrimination, and rejects any treatment of a person in a negative way because of their colour. The South African Government views this alleged mistreatment of African Nationals in China as Top of Forman infringement on the rights to dignity, equality and other rights of Africans. Our Embassy in Beijing has also sent a Note Verbale to the Chinese Foreign Ministry expressing similar concerns as South African diplomats have also been targeted in alleged racism incidents.

During the BRICS Virtual Foreign Minister’s Meeting on the COVID-19 crisis and its impact on 28 April, I stated that “South Africa strongly condemns any stigmatization or discrimination of States, peoples or individuals in connection with COVID-19” and stressed “that there is no place for racism and xenophobia in the response to the pandemic…”

As this is a broader issue that affects all Africans, the AU Commission Chairperson, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat called-in the Chinese Ambassador in Addis Ababa to provide an explanation, and express the AU’s deep concern about this matter. The Chinese authorities have given assurances that it is not China’s policy to discriminate against African nationals.

South Africa urged the relevant Chinese authorities to investigate the reports and take appropriate remedial measures. The African Group of Ambassadors in Beijing was also encouraged to continue engaging the Chinese authorities to ensure that Africans are not subjected to any ill-treatment, and are treated equally, with respect and with dignity like all other nationals in China.

We are positive that this matter will be resolved amicably given the strong historical ties of friendship and mutual respect between Africa and China.