

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO. 1474

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(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 15)

Ms N K Sharif (DA) to ask the Minister of Health:

- (1) Whether his department has concluded any work exchange and/or employment agreements with any entity of the Republic of Cuba from the 2010-11 financial year up to the 2020-21 financial year; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what (a) total number of Cuban nationals (i) have been employed in each of the specified financial years and/or (ii) are due to be employed in the 2021-23 Medium-Term Expenditure Framework period, (b) are the details of the work that each of the specified Cuban nationals was and/or will be employed to perform, (c) are the details of the specific skills sets that each of the specified Cuban nationals possessed and/or will possess that South African nationals did or will not possess and (d) are the details of the total cost of employing each of the specified Cuban nationals in each case;
- (2) whether his department took any steps to ensure that the specific skills set of the specified Cuban nationals were and/or will not be available in the Republic amongst South African citizens; if not, in each case, why not; if so, what are the relevant details of the (a) steps taken and (b) outcomes of the steps taken in this regard?

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REPLY:

- (1) Yes, the National Department of Health has signed a Government-to-Government Agreement, that includes work exchange and/or employment agreements with the Republic of Cuba that covers the period 2010/2011 up to 2020/2021
 - (a)
 - (i) The Cuban Medical Doctors group recruited to strengthen health service in rural and underserved areas in South Africa between the periods January 2001 to 2019. The group currently consists of 106 Medical Professions that are still performing medical duties in the Country under the Agreement.
 - (ii) A team of 119 Cuban medical experts and health Professionals with experience in planning, execution and management of the public health response have been contracted for a one-year period (i.e. May 2021 to April 2022). Mostly known as Covid-19 Cuban medical brigade.
 - (b) The Covid-19 Cuban medical brigade will be performing specialized expertise services as Epidemiologists, Biostatisticians, Public Health Specialists, Family Physicians and Health Care Technology Engineers and they each carry more than ten years of experience in their specific field of study.
 - (c) As mentioned above the Cuban medical brigade are carrying specific skills sets as Epidemiologists, Biostatisticians, Public Health Specialists, Family Physicians and Health Care Technology Engineers that are available but minimal in South Africa.

(d) Details of the Costs of employment are as follows:

Family Medicine Specialists-73 Remunerated as Medical Officers Grade II @ R 938,964.00 each per annum

Internal Medicine Specialists-1 Remunerated as Medical Officers Grade II @ R 938,964.00 per annum

Biostatistics Specialists-5 Remunerated as Medical Officers Grade II @ R 938,964.00 each per annum

Biomedical Engineer-26 Remunerated as Assistant Director @ R376 596.00 each per annum

Information Managers-4 Remunerated as Assistant Director @ R376 596.00 each per annum

Epidemiologists-8 Remunerated as Deputy Director @ R 733 257.00 each per annum

Senior Nurse-1 Remunerated as Professional Nurse @ R 383 226.00 per annum

Total Remuneration Cost for the 119 brigade= R83 030 688.00 per annum

(2) The above-mentioned skills sets are available in South Africa, however, these are limited in number and not equitably distributed across the Country. The scale of the Covid-19 pandemic required a greater demand of such skills to be deployed across all nine provinces and in some strategic entities of the National Department of Health including the NICD and SAHPRA.

END.