

**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**



**RESPONSE BY DR. KALUMBI SHANGULA TO QUESTIONS RAISED IN THE  
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BY HON. WINNIE MOONGO (PDM).**

**25 FEBRUARY 2021**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

*\*Check Against Delivery.*

Hon Speaker  
Hon Members

I rise to respond to questions raised by Hon Winnie Moongo of the PDM, and an Alumnus of the Ministry of Health and Social Services. Sometimes, I feel like asking you Hon Moongo to respond to some of the questions relating to the Ministry having been an employee of the Ministry. Hereunder follows the questions and answers.

*Question 1: How prepared is the Ministry of Health in particular, and government in general, in terms of the cold chain management of the Pfizer vaccine which required to be stored at a specific temperature?*

The Ministry has put in place a framework to guide the acquisition of COVID-19 vaccines for the country. Considerations to guide this process were made taking into account several variables. These include the costs of specific vaccines, cold chain management requirements and other logistics. The Ministry has noted the high costs involved in acquiring Ultra Cold Chain for the Pfizer vaccine. In this regard, we will prioritize procuring vaccine which has the same storage temperature range that the Ministry has in place already. As the Honourable Member is fully aware, being a Nurse and thus an Alumnus of the Ministry as I indicated, the Ministry has a well-established Expanded Programme of Immunisation (EPI) under which we have conducted vaccination campaigns for different diseases since independence. The COVID-19 vaccination campaign will be rolled out under this programme in order to leverage on existing capacities, expertise and infrastructure. As such, so far, the Ministry has not considered procuring refrigerators for the storage of the Pfizer vaccine.

*Question 2: Is the Ministry of Health and Social Services considering the procurement of new fridges for the storage of the Pfizer Vaccine?*

As I indicated above, the procurement of the Pfizer vaccine is not among the top priorities at the moment, and investment of limited resources in additional Ultra Cold Chain (UCC) facilities would not be prudent.

*Question 3. Is the WHO financially willing to support the Namibian government in terms of capacity building in the form of training for HCW, providing community education, purchasing of equipment and distribution among others?*

The World Health Organisation is not a financing agency but a technical agency of the United Nation. The WHO is however a member of the national response team supporting the Ministry in the fight against Covid-19. Its mandate is to improve capacity in Member States by providing technical support in training, education and other fields.

*Question 4. When can the significant majority of Namibians anticipate their turn to receive the vaccines? When will government acquire enough doses to enable the distribution of the vaccines to substantial portion of the population?*

The roll-out of the vaccine to the population will be multi-phased, as the country does not expect to receive all the required doses of the COVID-19 vaccine at once. A certain population

groups will be prioritized to receive the doses first based on their risk profile. The prioritized population groups are further articulated in the National Deployment and Vaccination Plan.

Moreover, based on the speed of production of vaccine products to enter the market, our hope is that by the end of the fiscal year 2021/2022, a significant proportion of the targeted population should have been vaccinated. This will depend on the vaccine landscape and production.

*Question: 5 Last but not least, Namibia is set to receive about 120,000 doses of the AstraZeneca soon. The AstraZeneca vaccine has proven to be 70% effective with normal Covid-19, but only 22% effective when poised against the new South African variant. How sure are we that the new South African Variant has not reached Namibia yet, resulting in us wasting money on the AstraZeneca vaccine?*

Namibia has sent a number of samples to NICD in South Africa to confirm whether the variant identified in South Africa is also present in Namibia. The results of these tests should be available this week. However, there is a strong suspicion that this variant (B.1.351) is already circulating in Namibia due to the extensive cross-border activities between Namibia and South Africa. The results of the investigations will inform on the choice of the vaccine to be used in Namibia.

I thank you Honourable Speaker for giving me the floor.

