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THIRD CONFIRMED CASE OF COVID-19 IN SOUTH AFRICA

Fellow South Africans, an announcement was made yesterday confirming the second case of COVID-19 in South Africa. In that statement, we indicated that the second patient is a direct contact of the first. We further indicated that they were a group of 10 people who had travelled to Italy.

We confirm that we traced all 10 of these individuals. Nine of them had returned to South Africa. The tenth did not and is therefore not in our country.

This morning we have received results of the direct contact of the first patient, his wife. She had also travelled with him to Italy as part of the group of ten. I now wish to advise the public that she has tested positive for COVID-19 and is therefore the third confirmed case in South Africa.

We expect the results of the other 6 group members who had travelled to Italy within the next 48 hours.

It is important to advise the public that the couple's children were tested and their results have come out negative. However, as part of taking extra precautions, these children will remain in self quarantine until their parents have tested negative. At that point, they will also be tested to ensure that they remain negative. Until then they will be regarded as potentially infected. This means they will continue not attend school. This is in an effort to curb the risk of spread to other children and teachers.

This morning, I had an opportunity to speak to the first confirmed patient. He was upbeat and jovial. I also spoke to the doctor who is treating him. She confirmed that this patient is responding well and is now asymptomatic. At the right time, as determined by the treating doctors, the patient will be retested to check his recovery progress.

Later today we will issue a statement and conduct live interviews to explain to the public the clinical observations and guidelines that are recommended to be followed in instances of asymptomatic patients. These will be based on the WHO guidelines and treatment methodology and disease management approaches that countries like China (who have presented a very high recovery rate) have used in dealing with asymptomatic patients.

Dr Zwelini Mkhize

Minister of Health

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