

## Parties to debate coronavirus readiness – IOL 2 March 2020

Cape Town - Parliament will this week debate the outbreak of the coronavirus and measures the country is taking to deal with the situation.

This comes after Speaker Thandi Modise agreed to a request by the official Opposition that an urgent debate be held in Parliament on the coronavirus.

Siviwe Gwarube of the DA said the Speaker's decision to agree to their request was important for the country. She said the debate was no longer about China, but what measures the country can take to deal with the outbreak of the disease.

“Globally, more than 82000 people have been infected with the virus, and there have been more than 2800 confirmed deaths.

“Although the virus has mainly spread through China, cases have been confirmed in Algeria and Egypt. On Tuesday, the World Health Organisation warned that the window of opportunity Africa has had to prepare for the novel coronavirus is fast closing.”

The Department of Health has said it was taking every measure so that the situation was contained. It has said South Africa has not yet had a case of any person with a suspected virus.

Meanwhile, the health portfolio committee is conducting public hearings on the National Health Insurance (NHI). President Cyril Ramaphosa has said they will not be reckless in implementing the NHI.

But the government has come under fire from opposition parties for the failure of NHI pilot projects.

Ramaphosa has said the NHI will be implemented over a five-year period.

The debate on the coronavirus comes after parties called for the government to be ready for an outbreak.