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Prof Mahlangu
Board Chair: Medical Research Council
JOHANNESBURG

Dear Prof Mahlangu

Conduct of the President of the Medical Research Council

I write to you to express our concern as government relating to the comments attributed to Prof Gray in the media. Prof Gray has made a number of false allegations against government. The attached statement from the Minister of Health identifies these false allegations which we consider as very serious..

We do believe that these allegations are damaging to Government's response to COVID especially at a time when we need all South Africans to change behaviour as the main intervention to prevent spread of the infection. These media statements cause confusion in the media and are likely to erode public support for behaviour change.

The MRC is an entity of the National Department of Health and the President of MRC has direct access to the Department of Health. We would have anticipated that such concerns would be raised directly with the Department of Health particularly since Prof Gray has been in regular direct contact on other matters. Subsequently, I have also received calls from persons regarding Prof Gray's conduct at the MRC on other matters which I will share with once I receive more details from them. I therefore recommend that the Board investigates the conduct the President on this matter given the harm it has caused to South Africa's COVID response.

Kind regards

**DR ANBAN PILLAY
ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL, HEALTH
DATE: 21 May 2020**