**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO.179**

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**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER 1 – 2021**

**179.Mr A C Roos (DA) to ask the Minister of Home Affairs:**

1. What measures have been taken since 27 March 2020 to provide special assistance for South African citizens abroad who were unable to renew their passports due to lockdown regulations, particularly to investigate the issues being faced by these citizens;
2. has any contact been made with governments of countries with large expatriate communities of South African citizens to find solutions to the problems created by the inability to renew passports; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
3. given the slow appointment systems to accept passport renewal applications at South African missions abroad that have been in place from time to time, have any measures been put in place to transport manual applications quicker; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
4. with the e-visa system needing to be in place in every mission by 2024, are there any plans in place to allow e-home affairs applications with biometrics to be done at the South African mission or visa partner in order that manual applications do not need to be posted to South Africa via the diplomatic pouch; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details? NW182E

**REPLY:**

1. South African Missions abroad provided limited services to South African citizens during lockdown. This included applications for passports and emergency travel certificates for those who wanted to return to South Africa.
2. No contact was made with governments of countries with large expatriate communities of South African citizens because South African citizens abroad were allowed to apply for passports during lockdown.
3. The transportation of applications and official correspondence from South African Diplomatic Missions abroad is done in term of Article 27 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, 1961and is done via Diplomatic Bag which is administered by the Department of International Relations and Cooperation.
4. Yes, the Department is considering the installation of the eHome Affairs and Live Capture System in the Missions abroad in order to reduce the turnaround times for South Africans living abroad. In July 2019, an IT team visited the UK Mission and concluded that before such installation is done a network security review should be conducted by the State Security Agency (SSA) before implementation, in order to prevent vulnerabilities and cyber-attacks and the implementation plan will be finalized during the 2021/2022 financial year.

**END**