**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**FRIDAY, 9 OCTOBER 2020**

**DUE DATE: 23 OCTOBER 2020**

**2256. Mr G G Hill-Lewis (DA) to ask the President of the Republic:**

(a) What (i) is the background and (ii) are the relevant details to the donation of personal protective equipment by the Government to the government of Cuba and (b) why did a senior office bearer of a particular political organization (details furnished) play a significant leading role at the handover of this equipment in Havana, Cuba? NW2828E

**REPLY**

The South African Government has entered into a government to government agreement with the Republic of Cuba. In the area of health, the collaboration focuses on the provision of qualified Cuban doctors to work in rural or disadvantaged areas of South Africa and medical training for young South Africans in Cuba.

In addition, a Cuban Health Brigade of 187 medical personnel arrived in South Africa in April 2020 to support the country’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Under a bilateral agreement between Cuba and South Africa’s armed forces, the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) has a number of students who are studying in Cuba. This programme started in 2014 and is ongoing.

In June 2020, some of the SANDF students completed their studies. Due to travel restrictions in many parts of the world and because there were no commercial flights to or from Cuba, the SANDF chartered an aircraft from South African Airways to collect the students.

The aircraft also carried a consignment of goods, such as personal protective equipment (PPE), sanitary towels and toiletries, to the SANDF students who had not completed their studies and were remaining in Cuba and to the South African medical students on behalf of the Department of Health.

The SANDF also received a request to transport a consignment of PPE that had been donated by private individuals in South Africa to the government of Cuba. Since there was space on the aircraft, the SANDF agreed to carry this consignment.

The South African government has not made any donation of personal protective equipment to the government of Cuba.

Neither the SANDF nor the Department of Health has details related to the involvement of a senior office bearer of a particular political party.