# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 2361**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 04 DECEMBER 2020**

**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 51)**

**Mr D Bergman (DA) to ask the Minister of Health:**

(1) With reference to international travel restrictions under Level 1 of the lockdown to curb the spread of Covid-19, what methodology was used to identify (a) China as a low-risk travel country and (b) Maldives a high-risk country;

(2) whether (a) non-residents, (b) persons employed abroad and (c) persons who will be relocating will be allowed to travel to identified high-risk countries; if not, why not; if so, what are the further relevant details?

###### NW2935E

**REPLY:**

1. The model that South Africa used to determine the red list of high-risk countries from where persons are permitted to travel to the Republic is based on a scientifically robust and tested approach that was benchmarked with other countries. The benchmarking process assisted the country to understand how best other countries are implementing interventions to enable proactive risk categorisation processes. The model and the criteria applied were based on globally accepted standards taking into consideration the guidelines as set by the World Health Organisation (WHO). Several criteria and scientific data are utilised to design, develop and refine the RSA risk categorization model. The primary considerations include the following:
2. the number of new cases per 100,000 persons over 14 days;
3. the number of new deaths per 100,000 persons over 14 days; and
4. the total number of accumulated cases in the given country since the first case.

Furthermore, the model also considers sensitivity analyses to assess the tolerance level rate to the RSA baseline. Other parameters such as testing data and active cases are considered. However, due to the absence of sufficiently updated data across different countries, it was recommended that these factors are not significantly relied upon. Based on all these factors, countries were classified according to three distinct categories: “Low Risk”, “Similar Risk” and “High Risk”. The “High Risk” category is what is used to create the red list of high-risk countries.

Therefore, the methodology outlined above is what was used to determine (a) China as a low-risk country and (b) the Maldives as a high-risk country. It must be noted that due to recent global developments and trends, the Cabinet resolved that the strategy of using the red list of high-risk countries should be changed and instead use the 72-hour PCR test and the screening of incoming passengers to determine if they should be allowed into the country or not.

 Based on recent global developments and trends, the Cabinet resolved that the strategy of whether (a) non-residents, (b) persons employed abroad and (c) persons who will be relocating will be allowed to travel to identified high-risk countries should be based on the use of the 72-hour PCR test and appropriate screening interventions at both the departing border and those implemented in the destination country to which all individuals are expected to comply as per those countries’ COVID-19 prevention and screening protocols. This decision takes into consideration the WHO’s guidelines on public health considerations while resuming international travel as published in June 2020 and subsequently updated advisories.

END.