NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

# QUESTION NO. 254

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## INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER 4 OF 2019

**254. Mr J J McGluwa (DA) to ask the Minister of Home Affairs:**

Whether he has been informed of any serious delays in the application of SA passports and other documentation at the Office for the Department of Home Affairs at consulates abroad; if so, what measures (a) have been put in place to reduce the delays and (b) will be put in place to ensure that his department and the Department of International Relations and Cooperation work together effectively to resolve the issues? NW1213E

**REPLY:**

1. The turnaround time for applications abroad is up to six (6) months as the Department (DHA) has a co-dependency on involvement of third parties, i.e. Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) for receipt inland and dispatching abroad of government documents including passport applications, through diplomatic bags which in itself is a controlled procedure that DIRCO administrates for all Government Departments.

The application process is thereby manual and non-automated, and entails the verification of citizenship which is a separately managed process and over and above, the fingerprint verification process should also transpire which may result in further delays, should the application be rejected due to the poor quality of fingerprints taken abroad.

In order to address the situation, the responsible support and line function units of DHA and DIRCO: Consular Services have created a stakeholder forum to find efficient solutions and redress the situation. This entails specific officials being assigned to receive lists of outstanding applications and then to liaise with the line function officials for processing and feedback to the Diplomatic Missions abroad.

1. The Department is looking into a permanent solution through its Modernisation Programme to ensure that applications made abroad or domestically can be captured and transferred electronically. This would substantially reduce dependency on manual, time consuming processes presently being applied.

**END**