# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 2985**

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

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

**Dr P J Groenewald (FF Plus) to ask the Minister of Health:†**

(1) What (a) is the total backlog of toxicological reports at the laboratories at present and (b) total number of reports have been outstanding for (i) more than 10 years, (ii) 10-9 years, (iii) 9-8 years, (iv) 8-5 years and (v) 5-1 years;

(2) (a) what are the reasons for the specified backlog and (b) how does he intend to eradicate the backlog;

(3) whether he will make a statement on the matter?

###### NW3813E

**REPLY:**

1. The table below reflects the details in this regard:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Forensic Chemistry Laboratory Cape Town** | **Forensic Chemistry Laboratory Johannesburg** | **Forensic Chemistry Laboratory Pretoria** | **Total** |
| (a) the total backlog of toxicological reports at the laboratories at present | 5474 | 10335\* | 12 372 | 28,181 |
| (b) total number of reports outstanding for (i) more than 10 years, | 1030 | 6333 | 526 | 7,889 |
| (b) total number of reports outstanding for (ii) 10-9 years, | 139 | 842 | 1294 | 2,275 |
| (b) total number of reports outstanding for (iii) 9-8 years, | 376 | 854 | 1519 | 2,749 |
| (b) total number of reports outstanding for (iv) 8-5 years, | 430 | 2370 | 2925 | 5,725 |
| (b) total number of reports outstanding for (v) 5-1 years; | 2484 | 4132 | 6108 | 12,724 |

\*As at 30 September 2020

1. (a) The reasons for the backlogs are:
2. The number of unprocessed samples indicated in the table above, include approximately 12,315 cases (multiple samples per case) without SAPS CAS (Case Administration System) numbers. The mandate of the Forensic Chemistry Laboratories (FCLs) is to analyse only samples with SAPS CAS numbers – these cases will thus only be tested upon request of the SAPS Investigating Officer or relevant Forensic Pathologist.
3. Of the 28,181 unprocessed cases as at 30 November 2020, only 16,550 cases contain CAS numbers.

(b) The following measures are employed to address the backlog:

* The laboratories are working overtime on weekends in order to decrease the backlog.
* Cases are prioritized for Court purposes, to assist families of the deceased to finalize insurance claims, or when children are involved.
* In terms of the Toxicology samples without CAS numbers, another engagement with Pathologists will take place to further discuss this matter with them. It should be seriously considered to destroy the toxicology cases that do not have CAS numbers.
* Urgent filling of crucial vacancies.
* There will be an engagement with the National Treasury to source additional funding for a building for the Pretoria Forensic Chemistry Laboratory. There were discussions with the CSIR which has space, however, the issue is lack of funding.

1. I will make a statement at the appropriate time.

END.