# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 493**

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**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 04)**

**Mr M S F de Freitas (DA) to ask the Minister of Health:**

With reference to the mandatory polymerase chain reactiontest when tourists enter our borders, (a) what informs his department to continue with the specified tests, (b) by what date will the requirements for the tests cease and (c) what is being done to ensure that tourists entering our borders experience an efficient, speedy and safe entrance in future?

NW558E

**REPLY:**

1. This is a requirement stipulated in the current National State of Disaster Regulations. The global community is still grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic and its categorisation as a pandemic by the World Health Organisation COVID-19 calls for countries to decrease the disease incidence through early detection and response. Requiring tourists to produce a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test is classified as part of the early detection measures South Africa has introduced to reduce transmission of COVID-19. This requirement assists in deterring travellers who are symptomatic from travelling and from potentially infecting others during travel and South Africans on entry into the country.
2. An increase in immunity levels against the virus by the general population and vaccination uptake will allow the country to revise some of these entry requirements as more and more citizens become less susceptible to severe disease caused by COVID infections.
3. Considerations are underway to allow fully vaccinated tourists to enter the country and allow for the use of other less expensive means of tests such as antigen testing in the future also in consideration of the epidemiological circumstances. There are also joint initiatives between accounting officers of Health, Tourism and Home Affairs to work on the electronic screening process of travellers.

END.