**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

 **QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

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**1216. Ms L L van der Merwe (IFP) to ask the Minister of Women in The Presidency:**

What (a) are the immediate goals and targets that she, as the new Minister of Women in The Presidency, has set herself for the period 1 April 2018 until the next general elections in 2019, (b) will she be doing to ensure that during this period the intended framework on sanitary dignity for indigent women and girls is implemented as envisaged in the reply to question 237 for oral reply on 8 November 2017 and (c) steps will she take in the specified period to address the gender-based pay gap in the job market which sees women earning 27 percent less than men for doing exactly the same job? NW1150E

**Reply**

1. For the period 1 April 2018 until the next general elections in 2019, The Minister of Women in the Presidency will strengthen and establish institutional mechanisms across government where there are none, review and resuscitate the coordination of the National Gender Machinery (NGM) and facilitate the establishment of the National Committee on GBV and Victim Support to address the increase of the scourge of gender based violence (GBV).

The Minister will prioritise the mainstreaming of gender within the current planning, monitoring and evaluation system and ensure the development of a country gender-responsive planning, budgeting, monitoring, reporting and evaluation framework. This will ensure that South Africa’s gender policy priorities are translated into budget allocations at all levels of government.

Furthermore the Minister will ensure that social campaigns and community dialogues are conducted to promote and raise awareness on socio-economic issues that continue to keep the women subjugated to violence, and impoverished.

The following frameworks that will guide the country in advancing women’s empowerment and gender equality will be prioritised: Sanitary Dignity, Financial Inclusion, Gender Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Gender Responsive Budgeting.

1. In November 2017, the DoW reported that on 10 October 2017 Cabinet recommended that the policy should be revised to become an Implementation Framework, recognising the spectrum of sanitary products available, the impact of the fiscus and be piloted in three provinces.

The following steps are going to be undertaken by the Department of Women (DOW) to ensure that sanitary dignity for indigent girls and women is achieved:

1. Finalisation of the situational analysis reports obtained from research conducted in the pilot provinces of Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga and Kwazulu-Natal in quintile 1, 2 and 3 (no-fee paying) schools.
2. Obtain validation inputs from the pilot provinces so that the current baseline is meticulously revealed in order to determine what the gaps are and how to remedy the situation.
3. Conduct visits to observe and gauge the extent of the current manufacturing capacity of sanitary products, be they pads, menstrual cups or tampons). This involves visiting the mainstream producers like Kimberly Clark, Proctor & Gamble, etc. as well as emerging black women owned and led small to medium players in the space; who are producing at a lesser volume, but are able to generate employment.
4. Conducting further research culminating into 10 research reports on the status of sanitary dignity among other categories of target beneficiaries identified in the draft Implementation Framework, i.e.:
* Women at Places of Safety;
* Women at Correctional Centres;
* Women at Tertiary Institutions;
* Girls and women in State Institutions; and
* Other categories in communities identified by local government and other role players.
1. Working with National and Provincial Treasuries on costing.
2. Closely analyse and work out the finer modalities of the value chain manufacturing/production, storage, distribution and waste management; in collaboration with relevant departments within the established National Interdepartmental Task Team (NTT), as well as the Provinces.
3. Look at matters of school infrastructure and sanitation, within the context of Menstrual Hygiene Management and the relevant pedagogy on Sexual Reproductive Health and Life Skills Training.

The department is working on an incremental approach in provincial pilot initiatives, as advised by Cabinet so that a rollout can be immediately unleashed in areas where the state of readiness has been adequately assessed and assured. The framework will be scaled up in the pilot provinces in 2019/20.

Other activities leading to piloting of the implementation framework include 24 stakeholder consultations with the Provincial Task Teams, Private Sector companies in the value chain to ascertain areas of collaboration and meeting with national task team members. Private Public Partnerships (PPPs) are crucial if the project is to succeed so as to ensure a broad, collaborative and effective implementation. Four study tours on sanitary dignity will be conducted to five countries i.e. Botswana; Kenya, Uganda, India and China for a comparative analysis and best practice.

The activities outlined above are required to inform the intervention; and thus, the focus in 2018/19 is on evidence collection in order to develop an intelligently costed Implementation Plan and M&E plan.

1. The gender-based pay gap is a world-wide problem and the South African labour market is no exception. The fact that South African women earn less than men for doing the same job is unacceptable and illegal because it is prohibited by law. In fact, the Employment Equity Act (the Act) as amended in 2013 provides specific protection in Section 6(4) read with Section 6(5) of this Act, which states that a difference in terms and conditions of employment (inclusive of pay) between employees of the same employer performing the same or substantially the same work or work of equal value that is directly or indirectly based on any one or more of the grounds (inclusive of gender) listed in subsection 6(1) of this Act, is unfair discrimination. The principle of Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value is further unpacked in the Employment Equity Regulations, 2014, to provide implementation guidelines for employers and employees in the labour market.

It is clear that efforts to address the gender-based pay gap in the job market requires a multi-sectoral approach. Strategic partnerships with all key role players in the labour market are of critical importance. For example, joint advocacy campaigns between the Department of Women, the Department of Labour, Commission for Employment Equity (CEE) and Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) and the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) to promote the implementation of the Principle of Equal Pay for Equal Value should be prioritised to raise awareness and educate employees, in particular women, about their right to Equal Pay. At the same time, it is important to engage Organised Business and Organised Labour to demonstrate their commitment to implement the principle of Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value in their own workplaces by ensuring that they eliminate unfair discriminatory remuneration/ pay policies and structures which perpetuate gender-based pay gaps in the South African Labour Market. Pay Equity, irrespective of gender or race and other prohibited grounds, should be a priority on the Wage Negotiation Agendas of all economic sectors to ensure the eradication of gender-based pay inequalities in South Africa.