**THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

 **QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**2647. Mr G G Hill-Lewis (DA) to ask the Minister of Trade and Industry:**

Whether, with reference to his reply to question 2142 on 19 October 2016, the National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications eliminated the backlog of applications for Letters of Authority that are older than 120 calendar days by the deadline of 14 November 2016; if not, (a) why was the specified deadline not met, (b) what is the current status of the specified backlog, (c) why did he not inform Mr G G Hill-Lewis that the deadline would be missed as undertaken in the specified reply, (d) what are the full relevant details of all steps he is taking to address the backlog urgently and (e) by what date will the backlog be eliminated; if so, what are the relevant details? NW3131E

Response:

No, the backlog of applications for Letters of Authority that are older than 120 calendar days were not eliminated by the deadline of 14 November 2016 that was given to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Trade and Industry;

(a) The complexity of the required skills, human resource and systems interventions to deal with the backlog have taken longer than anticipated.

(b) The backlog on 30 October 2016 was 1615.

(c) The meeting to inform the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Trade and Industry on progress is scheduled for 29 November 2016.

(d) The NRCS has taken the following steps to address the backlog as a matter of urgency.

(i) **Separation of administrative from technical processes –** Progress:The NRCS has developed and implemented administrative and technical evaluation checklists and processes.

(ii) **Develop and piloted risk-based approach -** *Low Risk:* Renewals, Local Manufacturers and Low Risk Application in terms of Products, Companies and Countries - Progress: Implemented RBA on Low Risk Applications, Implemented RBA on Renewal Applications; *Medium Risk*: Products, Companies and Countries, Progress: Piloting RBA on Medium Risk Applications; *High Risk*: Products, Companies and Countries; Different approval routes used based on risk classification.

(iii) **Human Resources –** Progress:LOA approvals section resources have increased from 5 to 7 inspectors; Additional 2 candidate inspectors – Short-listing completed, recruitment process underway; 4 more positions are being created to further increase the staff complement to 13 inspectors. Overtime has also been approved to assist with the reduction in the backlog in the short-term.

Progress is reported to the Director-General bi–weekly through the oversight process led by the Group COO and the Deputy Director General.

(e) the backlog will be eliminated by 31 March 2017.