**THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**3599. Mrs D Robinson (DA) to ask the Minister of Trade and Industry:**

Is his department currently working on any (a) financial and/or (b) economic empowerment initiatives in collaboration with the Department of Women in The Presidency; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details of the specified initiatives?NW4266E

**Reply:**

1. The **dti** fully recognises the challenges that women face in society and in the economy. The department recognises that women tend to face more barriers that hinder them from contributing meaningfully and effectively to the country’s economic aspiration of becoming a globally competitive industrial economy. It is for this reason that one of the objectives of our industrial policy is to promote increasing participation of previously marginalised citizens and regions in the mainstream industrial economy.
2. Currently, **the dti** does not have any collaboration or joint projects with the Department for Women in the Presidency. The department is, however, open to such collaborations should the opportunity arise.
3. The **dti** continues to provide a wide range of measures aimed at supporting women entrepreneurs and increasing their participation in the economy. Our wide range of incentives provides support to entrepreneurs and industrialists, including women. These incentives include those that support women entrepreneurs (e.g. Export Marketing and Investment Assistance Scheme, National Exporter Development Programme, Film, Incubation), women students and researchers (THRIP and SPII) and job placement of women graduates (ITUKISE). Some selected achievements include the placement of 645 women graduates in jobs through ITUKISE Programme in 2015; employment of over 14 700 women through the Business Processing Services incentives in 2015; supporting 574 women-owned companies through EMIA between 2011 and 2014; supporting 351 women-owned companies through the Exporter Development Programme between 2013 and 2015. To date, THRIP has supported 585 female students and 335 women researchers. However, **the dti** recognises that more can be done and, indeed, more will be done.
4. When the President established the Department for Small Business Development, some of the functions of **the dti** were transferred to the new Department. Women and Gender Programmes, together with all responsible officials and business units, were also transferred.
5. However, **the dti** has since established a new Women Empowerment Chief Directorate to drive women empowerment. A Chief Director has been appointed and has started to develop women empowerment programmes and initiatives. Once these programmes and initiatives have been finalised and concretised, we will gladly share them with you and the public.