**THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**Quetsion 953**

**Dr G A Grootboom (DA) to ask the Minister of Trade and Industry:**

Has (a) he and/or (b) his Deputy Minister ever (i) met with any (aa) member, (bb) employee and/or (cc) close associate of the Gupta family and/or (ii) attended any meeting with the specified persons (aa) at the Gupta’s Saxonwold Estate in Johannesburg or (bb) anywhere else since taking office; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, in each specified case, (aaa) what are the names of the persons who were present at each meeting, (bbb)(aaaa) when and (bbbb) where did each such meeting take place and (ccc) what was the purpose of each specified meeting?NW1081E

**Response:**

Yes. By way of example, the Minister’s office in the last month received on average, 10 invitations and requests per day from a wide range of stakeholders. Some of these requests are for meetings to be held in the office, invitations to events at embassies, networking sessions organised by Chambers of Commerce, numerous speaking engagements and so forth. Stakeholders include owners of large businesses, Chief Executive Officers of multi-national corporations, Ministers, Ambassadors, labour formations and so on. In other words, **the dti** mandate dictates that the Minister of Trade and Industry interacts with a wide spectrum of prominent stakeholders who believe their businesses may benefit from **the dti**’s offerings and he does so, in a variety of settings.

In this light and in common with a number of politicians across the political divide, including the Premier of the Western Cape, Ms H Zille, the Minister responded positively to some invitations from the Gupta family, to attend various events.

On the few occasions that any conversations took place between the Minister and representatives of the family, the content was general and no specific projects were discussed. This is in line with the standard practice Minister adopts with stakeholders where any specific requests for incentives are referred to relevant decision-making structures for approval or rejection. The Ministry would then only consider intervening for the sake of efficiencies if there appear to be purely bureaucratic delays in bringing a process to its conclusion.

To the knowledge of the Ministry, approximately 6 years ago one meeting at the request of the Gupta family was held at **the dti** offices in Hatfield, Sunnyside attended by the Minister, dti officials and a Mr Gupta to discuss the company’s investment plans. The nature of the meeting was similar to innumerable meetings the Minister has held with potential investors, both foreign and domestic. In the event, no follow-up meetings were requested or held.

The Minister also accepted an invitation to attend the wedding of a Gupta family member as it potentially presented an unexpected but welcome opportunity to informally meet with his then Indian counter-part. Regrettably, the Minister did not in fact attend.