



public enterprises

Department:
Public Enterprises
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

DPE DISMISSES ALLEGATIONS OF UNDUE INTERFERENCE IN ESKOM PENSION FUND APPOINTMENT

PRETORIA 02 August 2020 – The Ministry of Public Enterprises (DPE) has noted media reports about the recent appointment of the Eskom Pension and Provident Fund chairperson.

The choice and appointment of the Pension Fund chairperson is entirely the responsibility of Eskom. These malicious reports are based on a deliberately false narrative of DPE “interference “ in the management of state-owned companies. The Sunday Independent reports that Minister Pravin Gordhan “revoked the appointment of the first black woman to be the chairperson of Eskom pension and provident fund and instead appointed Caroline Henry to the position”.

This report is manufactured by an arrogant and destructive cabal employed to tarnish the reputation of all those fighting against corruption and to defend malfeasance. The allegations seek to tarnish the name of the Minister and sustain a narrative that has been propagated over several months by specific individuals that are entangled in SOE corruption and State Capture.

Certain publications and particular journalists have made it their life mission to discredit the work that the Department has put into eradicating the rampant theft that had come to define the procurement of goods and services at SOEs.

The Sunday Independent, which survives on pensioners funds, has consistently fed its readers deliberately distorted information with regards to DPE and its oversight of SOEs. This demonstrates a distinct pattern to aid certain political agendas and economic interests. The Sunday Independent ignored all the facts provided to its journalists by Eskom on the recruitment process, including the fact that the company ran the process with the help of an external recruitment firm. The process culminated in a final shortlist, from which Ms Henry became the preferred candidate. Ms Mantuka Maisela, according to Eskom, had not made the shortlist.

It is therefore simply not true that the Ministry intervened or vetoed the appointment of Ms Maisela to the position. In fact, and in line with the process, the DPE received a letter from Eskom Board nominating Ms Henry as the sole candidate. This is a mere do for consideration for appointment by the Minister.

Minister Gordhan approved the appointment of Ms Henry based on the information before him. And at no stage of the process did the DPE or the Minister contribute, suggest, or veto any names. The paper downplayed Eskom's responses to its questions regarding the situation regarding Ms Maisela's candidature and instead chose to caricature Minister Gordhan in line with its deliberate distortion campaign.

Before publishing, the newspaper was informed by Eskom that Ms Maisela had served on the Fund's board for a continuous period of 16 years, a service that far exceeds the recommended period in terms of acceptable governance and protocols.

The DPE recognises that the Fund is an autonomous entity that must oversee the management of Eskom workers' retirement savings. Its trustees include worker representatives and other stakeholders who must exercise the highest corporate governance standards and give Eskom employees the optimal environment to save for retirement.

The DPE calls on all to provide the space to the Pension Fund Board to perform their work without being concocted narratives of political interference. We are committed to a genuine transformation agenda that seeks to reverse the wrongs of apartheid and the recent State Capture atrocities. Competent and ethical leaders have been appointed to the Eskom Board and leadership layer under Minister Gordhan.

The Eskom executive leadership team, for example, is broken up to 70% African, 15% coloured and 15% white. Transnet has a score of 81% African representativity in its executive management, almost half of those being African women.

Distortions and other nefarious agendas simply fortify our resolve to improve the performance of these entities and simultaneously implement the Constitution's values of a non-racial, non-sexist South Africa.

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