



**public enterprises**

Department:  
Public Enterprises  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

### **DPE CONDEMNS BID BY SUNDAY WORLD TO PUBLISH FABRICATIONS ON ITS INTERNAL HR PROCESSES**

**PRETORIA, 16 March 2024** – The Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) strongly condemns an attempt by the Sunday World newspaper to publish fabrications and unfounded claims about the DPE’s human resource processes and tarnish its public image and that of some of its staff.

Sunday World reporter, Mr Mzilikazi wa Afrika forwarded a set of questions soliciting responses from the DPE on Friday over internal HR issues without providing a verifiable basis for his inquiry.

He indicated that the newspaper intended to publish an article this coming Sunday “about the restructuring and positioning of certain stuff [sic] in the department just before the election and the departure of Minister Pravin Gordhan.”

The questions sent to the DPE indicate that Mr Mzilikazi wa Afrika was intent on violating widely recognised journalistic norms and ethics by publishing private and confidential information encompassing DPE personnel records, contracts, and staff disciplinary matters.

In the interest of transparency and openness, the DPE wants to bring to the attention of the public the following facts:

- The vacancy rate at the department has been because of the DPE’s inability to find suitable candidates to fill available positions as per the prescripts of the Department of Public Service Administration (DPSA).
- There is nothing sinister about the DPE advertising vacant positions. The work of government is ongoing, and there is no correlation between the need to feel vacancies and the upcoming elections.

- The DPE has specific performance targets that require additional capacity for the DPE to be able to fulfil its mandate as a shareholder representative with oversight for key state-owned enterprises. These targets are contained in the Annual Performance Plan (APP) and the Annual Operational Plan (AOP).
- The Minister does not get involved in HR matters. He is the executive political head of the department. The administrative accounting officer for the Department is the Acting Director-General, whose purview involves providing oversight for all HR functions, including recruitment and staff allocation.
- The Minister did not submit any requests to DPSA to appoint Ms Borotho, the current Chief of Staff in the Ministry as acting DDG: Corporate Management. This is one of the baseless claims insinuated by Mr Mzilikazi wa Afrika.
- The DPSA declined only certain specialist – additional to the establishment -- positions that did not include any staff in the Ministry. However it encouraged efforts to fill outstanding vacancies on a permanent basis in line with existing HR and DPSA provisions.
- The DPE will not open itself to possible violation of its Labour Relations prescripts by discussing internal department matters relating to staff disciplinary issues in the public domain before such matters are concluded.
- As previously indicated when questions were asked by another newspaper in May 2023 about the DPE's tuition support for employees, there is nothing that prohibits any qualifying employee from seeking tuition support.
- Providing tuition support is a standard practice in government departments as this forms part of building organizational capacity.

The DPE is aware that there is a concerted campaign by some in the media to mislead the public by creating false narratives and fake news to denigrate the DPE and its political executive head Minister Gordhan.

These antics have become commonplace, but they will not succeed as they are a desperate quest to derail the work of the DPE, sow confusion among staff and in the public and undermine the current administration through what amounts to cheap electioneering theatrics.

The DPE reserves all its legal rights in this matter.

ENDS/

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