



17 September 2020

Attention: Media Houses

Response to Misleading Allegations by the Democratic Alliance

The Office of the Premier has received inquiries from a number of media houses, regarding some of the expenditure items incurred by the Office of the Premier.

These enquiries insinuate that the Premier of the Free State, Sisi Ntombela, has engaged in what they call “callous” expenditure. We wish to confirm that the Premier has remained true to her commitment during both the state of the province address and budget vote processes, that her administration will engage in ethical behavior and achieve more with less resources.

We wish to indicate that the information contained in the enquiry received was, in fact, patently submitted by the Office of the Premier to the Free State Provincial Legislature, as part of the Premier’s stance of constantly upholding the tenets of an ethical government, which maintains transparency and accountability at all times. All of the entities mentioned by several publications are, in fact, part of the government transversal contracts, which government has entered into legally. Furthermore, all the amounts spent, were and remain regulated prices guided by the relevant legislative frameworks.

The enquiries further make dangerously misleading claims that the Office of the Premier, under the Premier’s watch, held “parties” using the taxpayers’ money. This is absolutely untrue, as the events held by the Office of the Premier, have all been within the mandate of the Office, as the coordinator of government business in the province, and were all part of calendar plans.

MEDIA RELEASE



These important events, include, but are not limited to:

- The State of the Province (SOPA) Addresses and Budget Vote sittings;
 - Outreach programmes and campaigns of the Premier and the department, in general;
 - Coordination of celebrations of important national days such as the youth and women's days, amongst others;
 - Other key and strategic events which form part of the programme of action of government (POA), adopted by the Executive Council (EXCO).
- It is also worth noting that the Office of the Premier set asides funds for programmes related to Gender Based Violence (GBV). One of the passions of the Premier, is to deal with the prevalent scourge of GBV, which continues to manifest itself in our communities. It is our considered view that any loss of life to violence is tragic and government will spare no expense in ensuring that the lives of the people are protected. As such, the Office on the Status of Women and Gender Equality, is located in the Special Programmes Directorate in the Office of the Premier.

Moreover, we wish to categorically state that the Office of the Premier's main preoccupation, remains that of providing strategic direction and to coordinate integrated service delivery within government in the Free State.

The Premier remains committed to the core values of accountability, cost-cutting and transparency. The caring government of the Free State, is working tirelessly with social partners and stakeholders, to ensure that a battle against the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment is defeated.

All of these commitments, are what drives our vision as the current administration of building the Free State We Want.

ENDS.



Issued by the Free State Provincial Government Communication Services

Media Enquiries:

Sello Pietersen

Spokesperson to the Premier

Cell: 072 682 0202

