



## **MINISTER SIHLE ZIKALALA CONDEMNS DISRUPTION OF A GOVERNMENT EVENT**

The Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure Sihle Zikalala has condemned in strongest possible terms an incident of disruption which took place at a women in construction event in the Northwest Province.

Minister Sihle Zikalala attended the event at the invitation of the Black Business Council on the Built Environment, the Northwest Chapter, as part of taking the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure to various provinces.

The event was also attended by entities which falls under Minister Zikalala' portfolio such as the Construction Industry Development Board, Council for the Build Environment, departmental Branches such as the Construction Project Management, Expanded Public Works Programme, Human Capital Development to engage with women entrepreneurs who requested to be capacitated on programmes to enable them to take advantage of opportunities in the construction and infrastructure sector.

As the session commenced, Minister Zikalala who had been sitting with other panellists, a group of angry protestors stormed the event.

In the ensuing anarchy, they demanded that one of the panellists (the Chairperson of the Northwest Chapter of BBCBE), who was sitting next to the Minister be removed claiming he doesn't not represent them and alleging him to have swindled them of their money.

The confrontation had nothing to do either with the Minister or the Department but internal Black Business Council internal issues.

The security detail of the Minister reacted to protect the guest as they were not aware of who the group was and nor their intention.

While the Minister and the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure will not be drawn into internal ructions of the Black Business Council, it believes that it is inexcusable to deprive the many women who had converged at the event an opportunity to benefit from information and knowledge that would have assisted their businesses. The Minister has been leading the programme of economic inclusion within the construction and built environment sectors especially focusing on women and the youth.

The cry for people to be included in the sectors of the economy is the priority the Minister has elevated and will continue to pursue across the country as part of the Economic Recovery and Reconstruction Programme.

While the event proceeded. The Minister has urged all the aggrieved parties to resolve their internal differences without impacting negatively to the community at large especially the vulnerable sectors that still need to be propelled in sectors such as construction and infrastructure which are still excludes the majority and are dominated by males.

The police managed to calm down the situation. The Minister has warned that government would not be held at ransom by people who have grievances of what ever nature.

**Issued by the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure.**

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