



Media Statement by MEC for Public Works, Roads and Transport Mahlakeng Mahlakeng read during a weekly media briefing held at Head Office, Mafikeng, on Friday, February 05, 2010...

Date: Friday, February 05, 2010

- **Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Good morning and welcome to our weekly media briefing.

This is going to be a ritual every week when we request you to assemble here so that we can keep you posted with developments and programmes in the department.

This will also accord you an opportunity to make follow-ups on some of the pronouncements we have already made and to get to know our managers at the front desk of service delivery.

We also hope that this frequent interaction will cement relations and above all, demonstrate our accessibility, openness and transparency in dealing with issues at hand.

Latest on suspensions

The status following the suspension of our Head of Department (HoD), Mr Nic van Staden and the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Mr Kweku Odame-Takyi on December 14, 2009 is:

Both have now being formally charged and served with a list of charges preferred against them yesterday (Thurs).

Mr van Staden and Mr Odame Takyi have been charged with gross misconduct.

Each will have to answer to four charges respectively from Monday, February 22 to Friday, February 26.

The DC will sit at the Head Offices of the department of Public Works, Roads and Transport from 9am.

With regards to the Chief Director Roads, Mr Eddie Thebe who was suspended in September 2009 and appeared before the DC on November 16, 2009 when he requested a postponement which was granted:

He will now appear before the DC from Monday, February 15 to Friday, February 19 to answer to 10 charges of gross misconduct.

The hearing will also be held at the Head Office of the department of Public Works, Roads and Transport from 9am.

We have adopted a position in respect of the over elaboration of the contents of the forensic report by PriceWatershouseCoopers (PWC).

There is nothing more to explain or clarify. The report has been in the public domain for a while now.

Our position and way forward has been communicated effectively. We are of the view that:

We have adequately communicated the findings and recommendations by PWC and what the department is doing about the issues raised in that report.

A case of fraud and corruption has been registered with the police.

Latest on directive to implicated road contractors to vacate sites

We had written to road construction companies, Kaulani Civils and Moseme Construction to vacate various sites with immediate effect.

Our directive was informed by PWC findings and we took a view that the said contractors were illegally on site. Their purported appointment was fraudulent and grossly violated Government tender procedures.

None of them has heeded our directive. Moseme Construction is still on site on the Sun City to Phokeng Road as is Kaulani Civils on the Lichtenburg to Koster road.

We have now approached the court to obtain an eviction order against both companies and our application will be heard on Tuesday, February 09 at the Gauteng North High Court in Pretoria.

Our departmental response teams for road maintenance in Bojanala District (Rustenburg) will remain on high alert for immediate deployment to the sites to take over access on those roads.

At the same time, the department is moving with speed to have properly appointed emergency contractors on affected sites to re-start work and finish the projects ahead of the soccer World Cup spectacle.

This has to be done.

We are also following proceedings at the Gauteng North High Court today where our application for the setting aside of an order issued against us on November 26, 2009 to pay Kaulani Civils R64m is being heard.

Status of the Lichtenburg to Mafikeng road

We are happy to announce that the contractor, Tau Pele, is back on site. We are confident that the contractor will make-up for time lost.

This contract was never a subject of any investigation. We have managed to resolve the challenges which were purely caused by budget pressures in the roads directorate.

I thank you for your time.