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MEDIA STATEMENT

PUBLIC WORKS READY TO ACCOMMODATE NEW MP'S AND THE EXECUTIVE

The Department has been receiving a number of enquiries from various media houses on the state of accommodation for both Members of Parliament and the Executive. Sadly, certain media reports have tended to report incorrect information with regard to the current responsibility of the Department to provide accommodation solutions to the new administration, highlighting delays and exorbitant costs associated with the function. Nothing could be further from the truth.

According to the rules of engagement for the provision of accommodation for members of the Executive, the following applies: Once the President announced the Members of the Executive for a given Parliament, in this case the 5th Parliament, the Department of Public Works issued letters to the non-returning Members to vacate one of their units immediately and the other one, if applicable, within 30 days. The Ministerial handbook states "Members and their families are entitled, upon relinquishing (termination, retirement, resignation or death) of office, to stay in one State-owned residence until the end of the month following the month in which their term of office ends (one calendar month)."

As an update, the Department does not foresee major residential accommodation challenges in the Cape Town area as there is enough available accommodation stock to accommodate all the Ministers and the Deputies, except only for the period of cleaning and minor repairs after the current occupants have vacated the property. In the Tshwane region, affected Departments will be responsible for incurring the provisional costs of accommodating the political principals while additional accommodation is being sought. This exercise is expected to happen before the end of July.

For Members of parliament: The Department of Public Works is responsible for the provision of accommodation for Members of Parliament in Cape Town. Members of Parliament have thirty days after election to vacate their units.

After the swearing in of Members, when there is certainty as to who the Members are, the DPW starts a process with all parties to identify the number of residents for each party.

It is the responsibility of the parties to ensure that non returning Members vacate their residence as a matter of priority after the prescribed 30 days grace period.

The Department of Public Works would like to confirm that:

- Hotel block bookings have been made for Members of Parliament within the limits of the rates that have been prescribed by the National Treasury.
- Members of Parliament currently accommodated at the hotels will all be moved to state houses by 13th June 2014, when the process of house allocations is expected to have been finalised.
- Renovations have already started on the houses of the non-returning members.
- The DPW, together with parties and Parliament, is currently finalising the numbers of Members who will take residence in the villages.

With regards to office accommodation in Parliament, we are reconfiguring the office spaces of all Ministries and Departments within the 120 Plein street precinct and Parliamentary Towers Building.

We would like to add that in preventing systemic corruption that we had identified before, the Department has overhauled procurement processes, adopted the norms and standards applicable to the procurement of assets under the prestige environment and we are currently rolling out our anti-corruption plans. We are therefore confident that there will be no reoccurrence of malpractices in the acquisition of any new accommodation.

In the event that there are any attempts at malpractices, swift action will be taken against the culprits, as we are using industry experts and professionals to assess any asset we acquire.

ENDS

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