

MINISTER REFUTES ANTI-TRANSFORMATION ALLEGATIONS

PRETORIA – The National Minister of Public Works, Mr Geoff Doidge, MP, has this afternoon (Sunday, 18 July 2010), dismissed with contempt, the allegations of anti-transformation levelled against him.

The allegations were made by a member of the South African Institute for Black Property Professionals (SAIBPP) during a Business Unity South Africa (BUSA) meeting addressed by the Minister on Thursday, and further stated through an article in today's Sunday Independent newspaper.

In his response, the Minister has refuted the allegations and has called on the SAIBPP member to substantiate her allegations.

“It is unfortunate that even after a senior member of the department responded adequately to the SAIBPP member's statements at the meeting with BUSA, she has found it necessary to engage in mud slinging through the media. It is with a sense of dismay that we see certain individuals taking the time to make unsubstantiated and inaccurate statements regarding the supposed lack of commitment by both the Minister and the department to the transformation of the industry. Since my appointment as Minister, I have together with the department engaged with various stakeholders in the construction and property industry, including members of SAIBPP.”

“I have stated in various public engagements, my and the department's commitment to transformation, particularly the need for its acceleration. This was the basis for us accepting the invitation by Business Unity South Africa to address its members where we called on business to partner with government in increasing the participation of black people in the property and construction industry”.

“The meeting was attended by the newly appointed Director General of the Department as well as members of senior management where we collectively committed to further engagement with business to address concerns they might have. It is therefore disturbing that a person who was present at the meeting would instead of heeding the call we made for one on one meetings, choose to utilise the media as a platform to raise her concerns. One can only assume this to be a personal matter with no intention of responding to my and the department’s open door policy.”

The Minister also responded to accusations of endorsing a particular property fund through his keynote address at its launch, at the apparent expense of other black businesses in the property industry.

“If it is true that certain black businesses have seen a negative impact on their businesses through the launch of this fund, how is it that as a Minister and custodian of this industry, I only hear about this through the media?. Should this allegation be true, one would be correct in assuming that logic dictates that the first person to be informed of this, who would be in a position to act, would be the Minister of Public Works. This has not happened.”

“Further to the allegations made is a supposed three billion rand set aside for the Property Incubator Programme driven by my department. Since becoming Minister, this is the first time that I hear of this fund and I call on the member to provide myself or the department with evidence of this fund. Without this proof, one can only dismiss these pronouncements as being based on rumours and hearsay.”

“As a member of the African National Congress deployed to implement its policies in government, it is tragic to be accused of going against the principles of the ruling party, one of whose priorities is the transformation of the South African economy.”

The Minister reiterates his and the department's commitment to transformation of the construction and property industry and has further called on all relevant stakeholders to engage with him.

“The allegations made do not in any way sway us from the work we have been placed here to do. Our door remains open and it is up to any concerned and committed stakeholder to engage with myself and the department in constructive discussions on how best we can accelerate and achieve the intended increased participation of black people in our economy. Utilising media to raise baseless concerns does not bring us closer to achieving equal participation in our country's economy”.

END.

For more information:

Koketso Sachane
Media Liaison Officer
Ministry of Public Works
Cell: 082 728 8836