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MEDIA STATEMENT

MINISTER MACPHERSON ORDERS INVESTIGATION INTO ALLEGATIONS OF EPWP ABUSE IN NORTH WEST

- Public Works & Infrastructure Minister Dean Macpherson ordered an urgent investigation into allegations that EPWP participants at the Bojanala District Municipality in North West were forced to perform domestic work for a Mayoral Committee official and coerced into paying political membership fees.
- The Minister said such actions, if proven true, would amount to a serious abuse of power and a betrayal of the EPWP's purpose of providing dignified, skills-based work opportunities for unemployed South Africans.
- He reaffirmed that the Department will take action against any official or politician found guilty of misconduct, as part of broader reforms to make the EPWP more transparent, accountable, and free from political interference.

The Minister of Public Works & Infrastructure, Dean Macpherson, has directed officials to launch an urgent investigation into reports that participants in the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) in the Bojanala District Municipality were allegedly forced to perform domestic chores for a mayoral committee member and pressured to pay political party membership fees for her party.

The Minister said the allegations, first published in the Sunday Times, are deeply disturbing and contrary to the very purpose of the EPWP, which was intended to be a programme intended to create dignified, skills-based work opportunities for unemployed South Africans.

"If these claims are true, they represent a serious abuse of power and a betrayal of public trust. The EPWP was created to empower communities, not to serve anyone's personal or political interests, which is why I have requested departmental officials to work with their provincial counterparts in the North West, as well as the Bojanala District Municipality, to verify the allegations and determine whether national EPWP funds were misused and if the recruitment policy was abused. Any individual found to have benefited improperly would face swift and appropriate action, including possible criminal referral," Minister Macpherson said.

“There will be zero tolerance for any misuse of this programme. Public money must never be used to advance private gain, and I look forward to soon communicating with the public on the outcome of the investigation.”

The Minister said that it is because of allegations such as those levelled in Bojanala District Municipality that he launched a nationwide EPWP listening tour over the past year to listen to the concerns of the community as he works to reform the program. He says he is committed to removing corruption and abuse from EPWP to ensure that it meaningfully empowers participants through skills transfers to ensure that they find permanent employment.

“We are determined to make the EPWP programme transparent, accountable, and focused squarely on improving people’s lives because we are committed to ensuring that every rand allocated to the EPWP benefits those it was meant for, creating work, building skills, and restoring dignity.”

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