



public works

Department:
Public Works
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MEDIA STATEMENT

MEDIA STATEMENT: PUBLIC WORKS MINISTER GEOFF DOIDGE ADDRESSES HIS DEPARTMENT'S QUALIFIED OPINION

PARLIAMENT – The National Minister of Public Works, Mr Geoff Doidge, MP, today (Tuesday 13 October 2009), addressed a media briefing in response to the tabling of the Department of Public Works (DPW)'s Qualified Opinion by the Auditor General (AG).

Addressing the media following his briefing to the Portfolio Committee on Public Works, Minister Doidge has acknowledged and accepted the findings of the Auditor General.

“Notwithstanding that is an unsatisfactory situation; we remain committed as Ministry and that Department that we work towards a clean audit. As custodian of this department, I have the responsibility to ensure that policy objectives are implemented. As Minister I am committed to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to address this situation”

Minister Doidge mentioned the start of a systematic process of cleaning up with the view of operationalising a long term strategy that raises the bar on all levels for the department.

“We are doing this in a responsible and systematic manner and are not going to act rashly. We are on a course of identifying wrongs and weaknesses and re-aligning systems to strengthen and ensure sustainable delivery along which we can achieve policy objectives. We are on course to deliver on the mandate that the people gave us”.

As part of the Ministry’s initiative to identify and ensure that all weaknesses that have been identified are strengthened, Minister Doidge announced the appointment of two professional companies to do internal systems and financial audits.

“The findings of these two processes, which will run parallel, will form the basis for putting in place proper internal control systems to ensure that we do not have a recurrence of issues as in this report. My custodianship makes it important that together with the accounting officer and senior managers, we identify specifically what is wrong, set up mechanisms with which to correct these wrongs and ensure that in the long term, things work in such a way that policy objectives can be achieved”.

Minister Doidge announced that as part of the Department’s commitment to collectively working towards refined internal systems and healthier finances, he met with all senior managers in the department consulting with them on the way forward.

“Department senior management have, along the spirit of working together, been the first to be informed of these steps. I can reveal here today, that in that meeting, our senior management has shown a commitment to fully cooperate in identifying weaknesses and realigning systems. They have done so because they are convinced that this is an attempt to assist rather than to break down, this is an attempt to strengthen rather than to destroy, this is an attempt to go long term rather than to fix for the short term.”

In his acknowledgement of the work conducted by the Auditor General, Minister Doidge emphasised on the need for the department to strengthen its working relationship with other oversight institutions such as the Portfolio Committee on Public Works and the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, to fortify oversight over the department executing its mandate.

“As I mentioned to the Portfolio Committee this morning, I have had engagements with the Auditor General leading up to the release of the report. Oversight is needed to ensure that what is wrong in the department is identified and brought into the open. The AG’s qualified opinion has revealed the wrongs and it is now up to us to right these wrongs. This is a responsibility senior management of the department cannot and will not run away from.”

END.

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