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MEDIA STATEMENT

Nxesi commits to continue fighting corruption as the world commemorates the International Anti-corruption day

The 9th of December has been designated by the United Nations (UN) as International Anti-Corruption day to commemorate the adoption by the UN General Assembly of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC).

South Africa ratified this legally binding and universal Anti-Corruption instrument on the 22nd of November 2004 to underline its commitment to eradicating corruption in all sectors of our society.

As the Department of Public Works, we commemorate this day to raise awareness and make a call for action to departmental staff and stakeholders to unite around the aspiration for a corrupt free society and to play their part in imbuing a new culture of integrity in the Department of Public Works.

Fraud and corruption risks within the property and construction industries in which the Department operates is particularly high and the nature of the business provides a wealth of opportunities for the greedy and corrupt to exploit! The Department of Public Works has not been immune to these risks, with the magnitude of investigations into allegations of fraud and corruption and serious maladministration levelled against departmental officials and service providers during the past five years exceeding three thousand.

As a consequence, 355 disciplinary proceedings were initiated, resulting in 203 disciplinary sanctions against officials ranging from dismissals, final written warnings, written warnings and suspensions without pay. A sum total of 108 cases which

consist of criminal acts related to misrepresentation, and fraud and corruption have also been referred to the South African Police Services for further investigation and possible prosecution of the perpetrators, and processes have been initiated to recover an amount in excess of R1.3 billion in losses suffered by the department as a consequence of a series of irregularities relating to transactions entered into by the Department with service providers.

Whilst all of this makes for interesting reading and demonstrates the departments commitment to combat fraud and corruption, it also magnifies more than anything that we are grappling at the very least with a chaotic control environment compounded by a very serious ethics deficit in the organisation and our broader stakeholder community. Given our pivotal role as an infrastructure department on service delivery and more broadly, in alleviating the challenges that confront our country and its future, it is vital that we confront the ethical challenges that we face.

In responding to these ethical dilemmas we have accordingly released an Integrity Management and Ethics Framework that defines an ethics infrastructure for the department. The framework is to serve as a catalyst for introspection within the department and to drive ethics as a key consideration of organisational renewal and professional conduct, as well as to instil a compliant and responsible ethical culture benchmarked against the Constitutional principles on Public Administration. The framework is expected to further advance Accountability, and Performance and Consequence management processes in the department.

As we commemorate International anti-corruption day for 2018, I appeal to all departmental staff, as well as construction contractors, lessors, service providers, clients and other departmental stakeholders to appreciate the challenges we face as a department and country and to grasp this opportunity to play their part in helping us create a more ethical environment in which we can all prosper!

ENDS

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