



Private Bag X454, PIETERMARITZBURG, 3200
2nd Floor North Tower, Natalia Building, 330 Langalibalele Street, Pietermaritzburg, 3200
Tel: 033 846 6983 or E-mail address: nkosikhona.duma@kzntreasury.gov.za

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KZN MEC FOR FINANCE, FRANCOIS RODGERS, TO BOOST BLACK-OWNED SMALL BUSINESSES WITH EMPOWERMENT TOOLS

In line with his open-door policy, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Finance MEC, Honourable Francois Rodgers, met with leaders of the KwaZulu-Natal Black Small Business Association (KZNBSBA) in Pinetown last week.

The KZNBSBA is an organisation of over 220 black small business owners from various parts of KZN. Their meeting with the MEC was prompted by various grievances against the provincial government. MEC Rodgers sought to allay the complaints with clear responses and decisive action.

Leaders of the KZNBSBA lamented about delays in payments by government departments. The MEC informed the KZNBSBA that it was concerning that some government contractors were not paid within the statutory 30-day period. The MEC advised that KZN Treasury had formulated a plan in which the affected government departments will submit turnaround strategies to improve payments to suppliers.

“I encourage all affected businesses to reach out to my office so that their complaints can be escalated. We want to make sure that all government departments fulfil their obligations towards their suppliers,” he said.

The MEC assured the KZNBSBA that the Government of Provincial Unity (GPU) was determined to succeed. He appraised the KZNBSBA of the fact that the inclusion of multiple parties in the GPU was positive for accountability purposes. According to the MEC, no one party is dominant in the GPU. Instead, all participating parties are cooperating as well as committed to keeping each other accountable. Against this backdrop, the MEC advised the KZNBSBA that it should expect a more efficient government.

The KZNBSBA also raised concerns with some of government’s policies, claiming that they were being disadvantaged. The MEC advised the organisation that it was crucial for them to play their role as active citizens. He emphasized that public consultations are usually conducted before government policy is finalised. He urged the KZNBSBA to participate in the public consultations to influence government policy.

The KZNBSBA advised that MEC that it was not an accredited organisation and sought the MEC’s assistance with regard to their registration with the relevant bodies. The MEC requested the KZNBSBA’s constitution, mission statement and vision. The MEC, in consultation with officials at his office, will assess how to respond to the organisation’s request for assistance with their accreditation request.



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The KZNBSBA further complained about the lack of funding for contractors who supply services to government. The MEC advised that legislation in the form of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) prohibits the funding of contractors by government departments. However, the MEC undertook to consult with the MEC for Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Honourable Musa Zondi, to ascertain whether any support could be given to small businesses struggling with cashflow problems. Rodgers advised KZNBSBA that he would revert back with a response after his consultation with MEC Zondi.

As the meeting progressed, it became clear that there was a need for a capacity building workshop for members of the KZNBSBA and other small business owners who may benefit. The MEC said he would ensure that the workshop was conducted in an effort to boost small black businesses for their effective competitiveness in the market. The workshop will include guidance sessions on accessing financial assistance offered to small and medium enterprises through government's partnership with various banks. The Honourable Rodgers advised the KZNBSBA that he would revert back with further details after finalizing the logistical arrangements within his office soon.

Issued by KZN Treasury. For clarity, contact Spokesperson and Media Liaison Officer, Nkosikhona Duma on 071 383 0388 or Director for Corporate Communication, Musa Cebisa on 071 6878 777.