

Payment of contractors and Merebank Resolutions: Duma hails contractors who attended the meeting for ensuring collective wisdom

Media and Public Statement by the MEC for Transport and Human Settlements, Siboniso Duma.

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Inkosi Mhlabunzima Maphumulo House: Yesterday we had a fruitful meeting in Merebank with contractors who are responsible for the overall rehabilitation, maintenance, and construction of more than 34 000 kilometers of our road networks.

Despite challenges around delayed payments, we appreciate their solid inputs and suggestions as we work collectively to create a prosperous KwaZulu-Natal.

By and large, their inputs is an addition to collective voices, including those of leaders of political parties in the legislature who have openly expressed their support of the Department as we usher in a new era.

This era will be characterized by efficiency in the overall management of invoices for contractors and all service providers.

We wish to announce the following Merebank resolutions: -

1. Invoice-Checking War Room chaired by Head of the Department, Zibusiso Dlamini, to track progress on the payment of invoices. In this regard, we will work closely with the Provincial Treasury. We will also fast-track the return of contractors to construction sites.
2. Introduction of a new digital and automated system for the submission of invoices to ensure that no service provider receives preferences.
3. Ongoing engagement with the National Department of Transport to secure monthly payments of the Provincial Roads Maintenance Grant instead of quarterly payments.
4. Limiting the funding of new infrastructure projects until the backlog of all invoices is settled.
5. To ensure financial accountability, the HoD is leading the centralisation of all finance functions, from regions, to Head Office. The centralization of issuing of orders and appointment letters to contractors and service providers will strengthen governance and close accountability gaps that have historically made it difficult to maintain a clean financial reporting.
6. Another consultative meeting within three months attended by the MEC, Head of the Department, Zibusiso Dlamini, Chief Financial Officer, Thabani Nkosi, Deputy Director-General, Simphiwe Nkosi, Chief Directors of Regions, and affected contractors. This meeting will receive a report on the progress.

Importantly, it should be remembered that last year, we supported the Department of Education by redirecting R364 million of the infrastructure budget towards scholar transport.

We successfully avoided any interruption of learning, especially for Grade 12 and other learners who had to prepare for final examinations. Scholar transport will now be returned to the Department of Education to enable the Department to focus on the payment of contractors.

In conclusion, we continue to be a leading department in terms of revenue collection. For instance, the R3 billion collected through license renewals and vehicle licensing was redirected to Treasury to be used by all government departments.

Ends

Issued by the MEC for Transport and Human Settlements

Enquiries

Ndabezinhle Sibiyi | 082 375 4742 | Spokesperson for Transport and Human Settlements