

NCC commissioner not fired through advert: dti

National Consumer Commissioner Mamodupi Mohlala-Mulaudzi has not been fired through a newspaper advert, Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies said.

"The Department wishes to place on record that contrary to the news reports, Mohlala-Mulaudzi's tenure as Commissioner of the National Consumer Commission [NCC] was set to expire on 3 September 2012," said the minister on Monday.

Mohlala-Mulaudzi was offered the position of Commissioner due an arrangement reached in an out of court settlement. Davies and the then Minister of Public Service and Administration Richard Baloyi agreed to offer her the position until her contract with government as a Director-General in the Department of Communications expired.

In a letter to the Commissioner in February, Davies brought it to her attention that her contract would not be automatically renewed. The term of her contract was from 1 November 2010 to 3 September 2012.

He had further informed her that as in keeping with good governance and in line with the Consumer Protection Act, the post for Commissioner of the NCC would be advertised and that she was welcome to apply for it.

"To this end, the dti placed the advert in the newspapers for the position of the National Consumer Commissioner."

Challenges with financial management

The department added that the NCC had encountered challenges with financial management, with financial reports being submitted to the dti wherein errors were detected and with reports from one month to the next not balancing.

"Further, the Auditor-General in the third quarterly dashboard report indicated that there were serious concerns around the financial management at the NCC. His office was either unable to secure meetings with the Commissioner or meetings were postponed," said the department.

Following Davies' intervention, the Commissioner met with the Auditor-General's staff and after discussing their concerns, it was still reported that intervention was required in implementing controls over daily and monthly processing and reconciling of transactions as well as the preparation of regular, accurate and complete financial and performance reports that are supported and evidenced by reliable information.

Staff requested transfer

Additionally, the department's Director-General Lionel October requested that the department's internal auditor perform a high level audit of the NCC systems and processes.

Last year, the dti appointed an independent investigator to conduct an investigation into the state of affairs at the NCC. This as the department received complaints from the trade union Nehawu regarding non-

adherence to the terms of the transfer agreement and other concerns raised by staff members. This came after the department seconded some of its staff to the NCC.

According to the department, the investigation was also necessitated by a request from 11 staff members who have requested to be transferred back to the dti.

"The purpose of the investigation was to determine the status of reports about transgressing the terms of the transfer agreement, including relevant policies as outlined in the agreement.

"The intention of conducting this investigation was to provide Davies with an independent assessment report that would enable him to act decisively and bring the situation back to normal. There was no presumption of wrongdoing," said the department.

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