

**MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION,
PROFESSOR BLADE NZIMANDE DISMISSES THE FALSE ALLEGATIONS THAT
HE MAY HAVE INFLUENCED THE AWARDING OF A TENDER TO MR TILSON
MANYONI**

MEDIA STATEMENT

TO ALL EDITORS/EDUCATION REPORTERS

DATE: 17 JANUARY 2024

The Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, Prof Blade Nzimande has become aware of the circulation of yet another set of false and ill-informed suggestions that he as Minister, may have influenced the awarding of a NSFAS tender to Mr Tilson Manyoni.

Firstly, Mr Tilson Manyoni is not and has never been an advisor to the Minister, as erroneously suggested by some media houses. The names of the advisors of the Minister are matters of public record and discoverable with little or no difficulty.

Secondly, in terms of the Public Finance Management Act and applicable Treasury Regulations, Ministers are defined outside the value chain of procurement matters precisely to guarantee the integrity of such processes.

Therefore, Minister Nzimande had absolutely no role in the awarding of a NSFAS tender to Mr Manyoni or any other individual or company. These allegations are therefore both false and malicious.

Thirdly, the Minister is the Executive Authority and not the accounting officer of the Department of Higher Education and Training.

Therefore, any queries relating to procurement processes at NSFAS should rightfully be directed to the Chief Executive Officer or Board of NSFAS.

It is both unfair and mischievous to expect the Minister to answer questions relating to the procurement detail of entities, when such entities have their own accounting officers, executives and boards.

Fourthly, to ensure better stakeholder relations it is hoped that the media, civil society or political organisations will make an effort to inform themselves on the functioning of the procurement processes of public entities so as for them to make informed public commentary on matters related to public entities.

The Minister views the latest set of false allegations as part of the continuing attempts to tarnish his name and distract the Department from the important task of ensuring a smooth start to the 2024 academic year.

The Minister wishes to reassure the public that, together with the executive of the Department and the leadership of the Department's various entities, he stands firm

on his commitment to ensuring that the country experiences a smooth start to the 2024 academic year.

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INNOVATION