

Premier Ntombela hosts delegates from two countries



On Monday, 09 January 2023, the Premier of the Free State province, Sefora Ntombela held discussions with two delegates from neighbouring countries. The meetings were held at Free State house, the Premier's official residence in Bloemfontein, Mangaung, and were also attended by the Director General of the Free State Provincial Government, Kopung Ralikontsane and other officials.

The first meeting was between Premier Ntombela and Ntate Likhapa Sediane, the Consul - General

of Lesotho in Johannesburg. That meeting was quickly followed by an engagement between Premier Ntombela and the ambassador of Angola to South Africa, Her Excellency Filomena Delgado. The ambassador was accompanied by a delegation which included Colonel Tomas Marcos, Deputy Defense Attache, Counsellor Eduardo Kondua and Celestiono Goncalves, Press Attache.

In their deliberations, what took centre stage was for the Free State province and the two respective countries to establish relationships which will

benefit the citizens of the respective countries. In addition, Premier Ntombela and Consul General Sediane, in particular agreed that greater focus must be placed on, among others:

- Cross border crime, especially in regards to stock theft
- Illegal miners
- Undocumented Basotho nationals in the Free State province.

Premier Ntombela said there were countless opportunities for the three countries for trade and other opportunities. Key amongst their discussions were the endless opportunities brought about by agriculture.

Premier Ntombela pledged to visit the two countries in the near future to strengthen the ties but also to observe how they are able to optimize the commercial value of agriculture for the good of their citizens.

"Both Consul - General Sediane and Ambassador Delgado stressed the importance of agriculture in general, and farming in particular. They informed us how in their respective countries, the agricultural sector is thriving. Our hope is to visit both Lesotho and Angola in the near future to observe how they are able to get it right so that we apply what we would have learnt to our province to once again make Free State the bread basket of the country," said Premier Ntombela.

Transformation fund to assist black tourism businesses

The Department of Tourism is calling on all black-owned tourism enterprises to apply for the Tourism Transformation Fund (TTF). The department, together with the National Empowerment Fund (NEF), aims to provide a financial boost to these enterprises through the fund. "The TTF aims to drive transformation in the tourism sector in a more direct and impactful manner that will not only assist black-owned tourism enterprises to expand and grow, but also to catalyse the rise of a new generation of black-owned tourism enterprises to propel the tourism sector to greater heights.

"The TTF provides a combination of grant funding, debt financing and equity contributions to facilitate capital investment in the tourism sector by black entrepreneurs. The grant funding portion is used to reduce the approved loan finance and/or equity contribution by the NEF, where commercial viability of the tourism project

has been established," the department said. The fund will also provide post investment support to enterprises through the NEF and the department. New and existing black-owned enterprises are eligible for funding if they satisfy the following requirements:

The enterprise must provide services to tourists as its direct clients.

The project must have proven commercial viability and sustainability, as per the NEF funding criteria and due diligence.

The enterprise must be majority (51%) black-owned.

The enterprise must be black management controlled.

Shareholders must be operationally involved in the business.

The enterprise must be registered as a legal entity in South Africa in terms of South African law.

The enterprise must either be a black-owned

Exempted Micro Enterprise (EME) or black-owned Qualifying Small Enterprise (QSE), in terms of the Amended Tourism Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Sector Code.

"The department's grant contribution for approved applications is limited to 50% of the total loan finance and/or equity contribution approved by the NEF and is capped at a maximum of R5 million per beneficiary. "Co-financing tourism transactions between the NEF and/or other accredited Development Finance Institutions is allowed under the Fund.

Any such arrangement needs to be agreed to by the NEF," the department said. Applications can be accessed at www.nefcorp.co.za and can be submitted at NEF offices at West Block, 187 Rivonia Road, Morningside, 2057 or emailed to tourism@nefcorp.co.za.

- *SAnews.gov.za*

Centers to assist Prospective students with NSFAS application

The Office of the Premier in partnership with the National Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) will be across the province until the 30th of January 2023. The Youth Coordinators will be visiting various towns and setting up Application centres to assist prospective students with the application. For those requiring assistance, and cannot come to the centres, they can contact their respective District Youth Coordinators who will assist them virtually. Please contact your district coordinator for assistance.

To apply online please visit: nsfas.org.za

For enquirers, please contact:

Thabo Mofutsanyane

0615499450 - Njabulo Makhubo

Lejweleputswa

0603812112 - Lerato Nciza

Motheo

0768525780 - Mthuthuzeli Bidi

Fezile Dabi

0814974837 - Edgar Legoale

Xhariep

0836851066 - Lerato Sikisi

Lejweleputswa District:

10 Jan 2023 Fradie mayor Hall Welkom

11 Jan 2023 Tikwane hall, Tswelopele

12 Jan 2023 New hall, Wesselsbron

13 Jan 2023 Brandfort Community hall.



APPLICATIONS DRIVE

Youth Coordinators along with NSFAS officials will be at the following venues across the province:

DISTRICT	DATES	VENUE
THABO MOFUTSANYANA DISTRICT	10 - 13 January 2023	Maluti A Phofung (Phuthaditjhaba Multipurpose)
MANGAUNG DISTRICT	10 - 13 January 2023	Office of the Premier, OR Tambo House
XHARIEP	10 January 2023	Smithfield George Rantee hall
	11 January 2023	Rouxville, Rouxville community hall
	12 January 2023	Zastron Town Hall
LEJWELEPUTSWA DISTRICT	10 January 2023	Fradie mayor Hall Welkom
	11 January 2023	Tikwane hall, Tswelopele
	12 January 2023	New hall, Wesselsbron
	13 January 2023	Brandfort Community hall

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