

PRESS STATEMENT

Following an article that was published in the *Times of Swaziland Sunday* on 20 January 2019, we wish to correct the issues raised therein as follows;

Cost of Governor's vehicle: The model of the vehicle in question is not a Mercedes-AMG GL 63S as stated in the paper. It is a Mercedes Benz ML63 AMG 2015. Its purchase price was E1,544,584.21. Value Added Tax was E216,241.49, bringing the total to E1,760,826.00. There were no extras added on the vehicle as everything else came standard. In hindsight, we realize that we should have included safety features and maybe this accident could have been avoided. The assertion that the cost of the car was E2 Million is mischievously false.

Alleged breach of policy in purchase of the car: The claim that the purchase of the car was a breach of Bank policy is not true. The Bank has never had such a policy. The purchase of vehicles for the Governor and the Deputy Governor is regulated by the employment contracts of these officials, which contracts are signed between themselves and the Minister for Finance. The contracts specify that these are executive cars that the Governor and the Deputy Governor can use for both private and official business. The contracts provide that the Governor or the Deputy Governor may purchase such vehicle in accordance with the disposal policy stipulated below which is embedded in the contracts of employment;

- a) On termination of contract of less than 5 years, the Governor or Deputy Governor shall have an option to purchase the official car at 75% of its trade-in value as shown by the Dealers Guide.
- b) At the end of a 5 year contract he shall have an option to purchase the official car at 50% of its trade-in value as shown by the Dealers Guide.
- c) If the contract is terminated in less than 10 years but more than 5 years, he shall have an option to purchase the official car at 30% of its trade-in value as shown by the Dealers Guide.
- d) If the contract is terminated in 10 or more years, he shall have an option to purchase the official car at 20% of its trade-in value as shown by the Dealers Guide.

These provisions are similar in both contracts. The assertion that there is a policy that was breached is baseless. Further, the claim that at the end of the Governor's term of office he shall be entitled to purchase the vehicle at 25% of its purchase price is grossly unfounded, false and malicious.

Damaged Vehicle: The Governor's vehicle was damaged beyond repair in September 2018. The book value of the car at the time of the accident was E1,045,400.00. An insurance claim was lodged by the Bank after the accident, and an amount of E940,860.00 (less excess) has been paid by the insurance company. This happened after the Governor had used this vehicle for over three years.

Replacement of the Governor's vehicle: The Bank learns with concern that it has supposedly made plans to replace the vehicle. The Bank wishes to state clearly that no plans are in place to do so. If anything, the Bank has deliberately resolved not to replace the vehicle and instead has allocated one of the existing executive Toyota Fortunas which is similar in all aspects to the one currently being used by the Deputy Governor. Further, the excerpts attributed to certain "sources within the Bank" is nothing but utter fabrication as the meetings at which these were said have been made never happened and the policies mentioned therein do not exist.

Deputy Governor's vehicle: We note with concern the insinuation by the newspaper that someone at the Bank is deliberately frustrating the Deputy Governor. It is important to explain that the employment contract of the Deputy Governor is agreed to and signed between the Minister of Finance and the Deputy Governor. The Deputy Governor's appointment was announced in November 2015. The actual signed contract of employment between the Bank and the Deputy Governor was submitted to the Bank in November 2016, after having been signed by the Minister of Finance on 2nd November 2016. Immediately on receipt of the contract, the Bank allocated the Deputy Governor a vehicle from the Bank's fleet. Fortunately, this happened at a time when the Bank was awaiting delivery of a new fleet. The Deputy Governor was allocated a brand new Toyota Fortuna (4x4) from the fleet. Prior to the Deputy Governor receiving the vehicle, he was engaged and he was happy with the arrangement. It is therefore inconceivable how the newspaper could deliberately leave out such critical information and mislead the nation to the effect that the Deputy Governor is only using his personal vehicle. Further, the Deputy Governor was provided with an armed chauffeur who has specialized security training, and is available for him 24/7.

Having budgeted for a fleet replacement for the year ending March 2019, the Bank engaged the Deputy Governor to find out if he would prefer a different car from the one he is currently using to which he responded positively. In June 2018 the Deputy Governor communicated his preferred choice of vehicle. The relevant officials were assigned to source quotations, which process was completed in August 2018, and the Deputy Governor is yet to make the final choice. After the choice has been made, a paper will be compiled for the Board, as per practice.

Simultaneous to the Bank's internal procurement processes, the Royal Commission also began its review of packages for politicians. The Bank found it necessary to also wait for the conclusion of the exercise to inform the purchase that the Bank was preparing for in respect of either the Governor and Deputy Governor's vehicles.

Possible loss of life: We thank God that the accident in question did not take any life, though some people were hurt. People could have died. Despite the said newspaper's interest and concentration on a car, the Bank would like to focus on the hand of God and be grateful that He saved all the lives involved.

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