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MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION STEPS IN TO SUPPORT EDUCATION ASSISTANTS AFFECTED BY PAYMENT DELAYS

The Minister of Basic Education, Ms Siviwe Gwarube MP, has expressed deep concern regarding the delays in stipend payments to Education Assistants employed through the Basic Education Employment Initiative (BEEI).

To urgently address the matter, the Minister, together with the Deputy Minister of Employment and Labour, Mr Jomo Sibiya MP, has convened a high-level meeting with all key stakeholders responsible for the administration and payment of the programme, including the Department of Basic Education (DBE), the Department of Employment and Labour (DEL), and the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC). The DEL represents the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF), which funds the initiative, while the IDC serves as the programme's implementing agent.

The meeting seeks to:

- Identify and resolve the root causes of the current payment delays;
- Ensure that all outstanding stipends are processed as a matter of priority; and
- Put in place stronger systems to prevent future disruptions to payment schedules.

Minister Gwarube emphasised her awareness of the strain these delays have placed on Education Assistants and their families, noting that many rely on the stipends to support their daily livelihoods. She further acknowledged that the delays have undermined confidence in a programme that has been instrumental in providing work opportunities and supporting schools nationwide.

“Education Assistants are not only vital to our school communities, they are young people whose livelihoods depend on this initiative. I want to extend my sincere apologies to every participant affected by these delays. We are working tirelessly with our partners to ensure that all payments are finalised without any further setbacks,” said Minister Gwarube.

Minister Gwarube reaffirmed the Department's commitment to ensuring the **smooth functioning of the BEEI**, safeguarding the integrity of the programme, and upholding the dignity of its participants. An update will be provided to the public once immediate corrective measures have been finalised and implemented.

ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

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