

DATE: 26 MAY 2025

TO: HONOURABLE MINISTER OF COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS

HON. V. HLABISA

FROM: UNEMPLOYED ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONER'S

SUBJECT: **FOLLOW-UP ON EMPLOYMENT PROCESS OF 520 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONERS AS STATED BY THE MINISTER ON THE YEAR (2024)**

Dear Honourable Minister,

We hope this letter finds you well. We writing this letter following the commitment made by Department of Co-Operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) Minister to enquire funding from the National Treasury and fund employment of 520 Environmental Health Practitioners to be deployed across districts in South Africa strengthen food safety and public health. This initiative is crucial in addressing the ongoing rising foodborne illnesses and deaths while there are many qualified Environmental Health Practitioners who are ready to serve and protect the public from preventative infections and illnesses.

We acknowledge the commitment and we appreciate the government's recognition of the urgent need for Environmental Health Practitioners to enhance regulatory oversight, particularly in food handling facilities. Announcement regarding the deployment of 10 EHPs per district municipality was met with optimism as it directly could address gaps in Municipal Health Services and strengthen regulations including those pertaining to food handling outlets.

Local municipalities in South Africa play a crucial role in ensuring the health and well-being of their communities by providing a comprehensive range of environmental health services and enforcing relevant regulations to prevent public health nuisances and hazards.

We believe CoGTA role in environmental health is to facilitate a collaborative and coordinated approach to ensure that all South Africans have access to safe and healthy environment it all starts with anything they ingest. Urgency of implementation of more Environmental Health Practitioners despite the commitment of the Minister, many qualified EHPs are unemployment and as a nation we are below standard that means regulations are not enforced as they should be more people are eating food from facilities that are not inspected to ensure food safety which makes more communities to be vulnerable to foodborne illnesses and deaths across the country.

We request for:

- The feedback as the Minister stated that there will be requests of funding from National Treasury.
- The timeframe of employment of 520 EHPs.
- Deployment plans for those EHPs to be appointed.

As advocates for Environmental Health Practitioners employment we are eager to support this initiative through public awareness campaigns, stakeholder engagements and policy discussions. We would appreciate the opportunity to collaborate with CoGTA to ensure

effective implementation and long-term sustainability on this program. We strongly believe the Department will address this matter. The unemployment of EHP's is not just a professional issue, it is a public health issue and risk. South Africa requires a fully equipped workforce to combat rising health challenges.

**We respectfully request formal written feedback from your office within (7 working days) from the date of this letter.**

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter and we are hoping for positive feedback.

Yours in struggle

UNEMPLOYED ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONER'S

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