



STATEMENT ON ALLEGED LOSS OF REVENUE BY ESWATINI REVENUE AUTHORITY THROUGH FRAUD

Following recent reports in the media about some issues relating to an alleged loss of revenue by the Eswatini Revenue Authority (SRA) due to fraud perpetrated by members of staff, as an organization we want to highlight the following:

1. We can confirm that, through our systems and through whistle blowing activities, we have uncovered some issues relating to corruption allegedly perpetrated by some of our officers in partnership with some taxpayers.
2. Internal investigations are ongoing and all those involved in the fraudulent activities will be dealt with in accordance with the relevant laws and policies
3. Our preliminary investigations reveal that some employees colluded with taxpayers to delay the collection of revenue by assisting them circumvent some of our processes, such as the issuance of Tax Compliance Certificates, which a taxpayer is not entitled to unless they are fully compliant.
4. Equally important to note is that the taxpayers who colluded with the implicated employees in this manner have only exacerbated their tax issues, as they have only served to postpone payment whilst their accounts have continued to accumulate significant amounts of interest on the tax debts, which *must* still be paid.
5. Furthermore, we wish to caution our taxpayers that the SRA has put in place strong processes and systems that do not allow an individual officer to reduce or eliminate a taxpayer's debt. Any suggestion by an officer that s/he can deliver that is a gross misrepresentation of the facts and can only result in further losses to the taxpayer as they will pay the officer and yet still have to contend with the outstanding tax debt at some point.
6. When we took over the responsibility to collect revenue for the state in 2011, as an organization we made a commitment to restore the integrity of the revenue administration in the country and re-establish public trust in the institution. It is for this reason that we commit to a full investigation of any member of our staff involved in such activities and ensuring that anyone found guilty of such an offence is dealt with comprehensively.

7. Moreover, as an organization we have been very open in dealing with issues of corruption and promoting integrity amongst staff members. This is borne out by the fact that we are constantly on public platforms to encourage our taxpayers to report to us such practices and we have taken action against those implicated. We are an organization that has a strong code of conduct, which includes a NO GIFTS policy that is designed to ensure that we execute our mandate fairly and equitably without favour. Furthermore, we have demonstrated our zero tolerance for these activities by dealing comprehensively with anyone found to be involved in such. We are determined not to allow the few to taint the good work of the majority of our staff.
8. Above all, may we, at this point, appeal to our taxpayers to desist from colluding with the few delinquent members of staff in this manner as this will have unpleasant consequences.
9. Finally, we appreciate all those members of the team who continue to render their services to the people of Eswatini diligently and with the highest levels of integrity, and we further appreciate the compliant taxpayers for their contribution to the fiscus as well as those that have partnered with the Authority in fighting corruption. We encourage all Emaswati and residents of Eswatini to report unprofessional conduct by any member of our staff and inappropriate practices by taxpayers, through our Toll Free line 8008000.

DUMISANI E. MASILELA
COMMISSIONER GENERAL
28 NOVEMBER 2019