



13 April 2020

MEDIA STATEMENT

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL CLARIFIES PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CHURCH OF SCIENTOLOGY OVER FUMIGATION

Pretoria, 13 April 2020: The Acting Director-General of the Department of Social Development, Mr Mzolisi Toni, has noted with concern the circulation of a letter on social media platforms which authorises Scientology Volunteer Ministries, an NPO, to render sanitising services to DSD National and DSD Provincial Facilities during the COVID-19 lockdown.

The letter, dated 02 April 2020, which is on the Department of Social Development's official letterhead under the signature of the Acting Director-General is legitimate. The Acting Director-General, however, wishes to put it on record that the only agreement that existed between the Department of Social Development and Scientology Volunteer Ministries was a once-off agreement that involved the fumigation of its premises and facilities.

To date, the NPO has rendered free fumigation services at the Department's head office in Pretoria, the Gauteng Social Development head office in Johannesburg and a number of DSD facilities in the Gauteng region.

Unfortunately, due to the fact that there are currently persons calling door to door claiming to represent the Scientology Volunteer Ministries and carrying out "COVID-19 sanitisation" on behalf of the Department, the Department and the Scientology Volunteer Ministries have agreed to terminate the fumigation agreement.

The Department acknowledges the good work of the church but cannot be drawn into misrepresentation when the prime focus of the Department is on rolling out interventions to mitigate against COVID-19.

The Acting Director-General wishes to warn members of the public that the Department has not contracted or partnered with any organisation to conduct door to door sanitisation for COVID-19. The Acting Director-General is advising members of the public to remain vigilant of opportunists and criminals who want to take advantage of them during the lockdown period.

Under no circumstances would the Acting Director-General direct an Accounting

Officer of another public entity/organisation or a household to use an NPO for unsolicited services, more so when the services in question do not relate to the core mandate of the Department. The Department of Social Development is committed to playing a role in offering services and relief to vulnerable groups during the country's fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

ISSUED BY THE NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT