

## Transmitted by email

14 June 2018

To: Minister of Water and Sanitation, Minister Gugile Nkwinti  
Delivered via: Private Secretary to the Minister, Ms Notshe  
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And To: Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Water and Sanitation,  
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Dear Minister Nkwinti

### **RE: UMGENI INTERIM WATER BOARD'S INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL**

1. We refer to our letter dated 12 June 2018 (**ANNEX A**).
2. In it we, the Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse (OUTA) indicate that a majority of the members of the Umgeni Water Interim Board are attending a conference hosted by the American Water Works Association (AWWA) in Las Vegas from 11-14 June 2018.
3. In the letter we request you to confirm if whether approval for the international trip was obtained as is required in terms of a letter authored by former Minister Mokonyane on 10 July 2016 (**ANNEX B**).
4. It has recently been brought to our attention that a majority of the members of the Umgeni Interim Board will be undertaking further international travel in July and August.

**From 8 – 12 July 2018, they will be in Singapore for the International Water Week and from 26 - 31 August 2018 they will be in Stockholm, Sweden for the World Water Week.**

5. Our information indicates that the Chairperson, Chief Executive, a Board Member, Secretariat and an Executive/Senior Manager (to be appointed by the Chief Executive) will be present.
6. Honourable Minister, OUTA is aware that the main task of this Interim Board is to **“devise a turnaround strategy to address the current governance, oversight and accountability challenges at Umgeni Water”**. This is according to a Memorandum (“memo”) titled **“REQUEST TO APPOINT THE INTERIM BOARD OF UMGENI WATER UNTIL A NEW BOARD IS IN PLACE”**.
7. This memo is signed by the acting Deputy-Director-General (Regulation) and the acting Director-General on 28 September 2017. The memo is also signed by former Minister Mokonyane on 27 September 2017.
8. Minister Nkwinti, similar to the letter pertaining to the Las Vegas trip,
  - 8.1 has the Umgeni Interim Board obtained the necessary approval for international travel to Singapore and Sweden?
  - 8.2 if so, kindly furnish evidence confirming the application and approval;
    - 8.2.1 kindly provide reasons for such approval in light of the financial issues in the water sector;
    - 8.2.2 is the delegation a “reasonable number”, if so, how?
    - 8.2.3 how does attending these conferences achieve the main task of the Interim Board which is to **“devise a turnaround strategy to address the current governance, oversight and accountability challenges at Umgeni Water”**?
  - 8.3 if approval was not obtained, how will members be held accountable other than paying for the cost of travel and accommodation from their own pockets?

9. In light of these recent developments, and assuming that approval for the conferences in Singapore and Sweden has been obtained, we recommend that such approval be revoked and that the Interim Board not travel to the said destinations. This is because it is our view that the funds used for attending these conferences could be better utilised elsewhere and that attending conferences does not achieve the main task of the Interim Board.

Yours faithfully,



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**Yamkela Ntola**

**Portfolio Manager: Water & Environment**

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