



the premier

Department of
the Premier
FREE STATE PROVINCE

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For immediate release

MEDIA ADVISORY

The Minister of Communications, Ms Dina Pule met with Premier Ace Magashule and Members of the Free State Executive Council today in Bloemfontein.

The visit to the Free State is part of Minister Pule's Provincial Stakeholder Engagement plan, which seeks to ensure that plans of state owned companies under her department are aligned to provincial growth strategies and other economic development initiatives.

Minister Pule led a delegation comprising CEOs and Chairpersons of major public companies such as Sentech, SABC, USAASA, Post Office, Postbank, Nemisa, and regulator ICASA.

Minister Pule briefed Premier Magashule and MECs on progress around the Digital Terrestrial Television, National ICT Policy Review and the Broadband Strategy.

The Department of Communications has prioritized the roll-out of ICT Centres and school labs in rural areas. The Post Office will also expand its infrastructure to reach more rural people as it delivers on its assigned responsibility of Set-top-box distribution.

Among the key matters addressed in the meeting was broadband access and e-government connectivity to improve governance and the quality of services delivered by government.

Minister Pule and Premier Magashule signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) covering a number of areas such as e-health connectivity, schools labs and connectivity, e-agriculture, community broadcasting and provision of basic ICT services as base for service delivery.

A total of 144 schools in the Free State have been earmarked for school connectivity. Already a total of 51 schools have been connected. Minister Pule committed to work with the provincial Department of Education to fast-track the process of connecting the remaining schools.

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The Department of Education working with the Post Office will also investigate the possibility of using Post Offices distribution network to distribute school textbooks.

The Free State is also set to benefit from the implementation of e-government connectivity to improve the digitalization of government records.

The Free State province has also been identified to host an ICT Incubation hub. The Department of Communications has also committed to improve community broadcasting. A total of 12 community radio stations have been licensed in the province. The DOC committed to upgrade infrastructure equipment of community radio stations.

Minister Pule also revealed the DOC's plans to rollout telecenters in the province. A total of 8 sites have been identified for rapid deployment of telecenters in the province.

Two sites have been confirmed in Viljoenskroon and Koffiefontein.

Premier Magashule welcomed the visit by the Minister and her delegation saying it would ensure synergy between efforts of the state companies under Minister Pule's oversight and the provincial government.

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