

Media Statement

Monday, 10 May 2024

**Attention: Editors/ Journalists
For Immediate Release**

THE FSGLTA ACT 3 OF 2024 ENACTED TO RECLAIM CONTROL OVER THE LIQUOR INDUSTRY IN THE FREE STATE PROVINCE

Bloemfontein, On May 10, the Premier of the Free State Province, Mr. Mxolisi Dukwana, signed the Amendment Bill into an Act. Over the past years, the Free State Gambling, Liquor, and Tourism Authority (FSGLTA) has been mired in numerous litigations, draining the entity's budget, and witnessing the mushrooming of new liquor outlets.

Liquor has been accused of being a major source of Gender-Based Violence (GBV). Relevant groups have made a clarion call for everyone to join hands to reduce the scourge of violence perpetuated against women and children. The FSGLTA has proactively taken upon itself the role of reducing GBV, which is seen to stem from the liquor industry regulated by the entity. The previous legislation, Act 4 of 2017, lacked stringent prescripts to curb the proliferation of liquor outlets and allowed an environment where liquor trading could be easily conducted, further fueling violence in our towns.

The new Act also endeavors to streamline the operations of dual legislations that have governed the same industry in the province since 1989 until May 10, 2024. The operation of dual legislations provided opportunities to trade outside the regulations, causing mayhem in areas where these outlets were located. One such example was that the Free State Liquor Act 27 of 1989 allowed trading hours up until 4:00 AM, causing a nuisance to neighbors, especially where these outlets were within residential areas. These dual legislations were also silent on certain issues that affected the application process, such as parking space, which forced the entity to make pronouncements and later be litigated for acting outside its jurisdiction. The new legislation requires a separation of responsibilities in different areas of specialty, ensuring that the appropriate structure is responsible for responding to specific litigation.

The amendment of section 31 compels the municipality and designated police officers to compile and provide relevant reports to the applicant, ensuring that the regulator does not overstep its area of specialty, which has its own governing prescripts.

In response to the public outcry, a clause has been inserted to exclude natural persons who are not citizens of the Republic from operating liquor outlets. This measure aims to protect the community from the sale of fake liquor, which has often been attributed to non-citizens. The entity will continue to work with all law enforcement agencies to eliminate such products from the market and protect consumers from unscrupulous traders.

“Liquor revenue continues to be the main source of revenue collection for the entity, but the entity cannot be blinded by high revenue collection to the detriment of the health and safety of our communities. Work will continue to enforce compliance within the industry as we reclaim control over the liquor industry within the province,” said the Acting Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Lefa Kalane.

The Amendment Bill will be rolled out within the industry through stakeholder engagement to ensure that all are conversant with the new legislation as the province implements phase one of a series of enforcing compliance through strict regulations throughout the year.

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