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MEDIA STATEMENT

KWAZULU-NATAL PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE MEC MEETS WITH TOYOTA AMIDST ONGOING INFRASTRUCTURE CHALLENGES THREATENING THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR IN THE PROVINCE

Today, MEC for the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure for KwaZulu-Natal, Martin Meyer, honoured a meeting request with the management and engineers of Toyota, one of the biggest manufacturing operators in the province and country. The meeting took place at the vehicle manufacturer's facility in Prospecton, South of Durban.

During the meeting the team from Toyota expressed a series of challenges and concerns around the dilapidating and ageing state of infrastructure which was hindering the industrial zone from operating efficiently. The vehicle manufacturing giant told MEC Meyer that due to aged infrastructure and maintenance neglect industries had been exposed to damaging knock-on effects such as the April 2022 floods where the plant was completely flooded within less than an hour, leading to an operational shutdown of 104 days.

MEC Meyer expressed shock at the shared revelation that since the 2022 floods temporary measures were still in place.

The other issue was the inconsistent power supply which they continue to be subjected to. The lack of water supply was another threat that Toyota faces constantly which has forced it to invest millions of their own money into water supply. Consistent sewer issues were another problem various businesses and manufacturers have to contend with at the industrial zone.

According to Toyota, poor infrastructure threatens growth and expansion as this is something potential investors take into serious consideration.

To put the scale of impact into context, Toyota revealed that it employs just under 10 000 people, produces around 600 vehicles each day and contributes billions of Rands into the economy, including through taxes, which are meant to ensure the delivery of infrastructure.

In his response, MEC Meyer indicated that there is a pressing need to inject synchronicity between national, provincial and local spheres of government when it comes to infrastructure and that the introduction of the provincial infrastructure council will go a long way to making this happen.

MEC Meyer also noted that there is an urgent need to address the issue of flood protection in the face of climate change to ensure that the effects of the 2022 floods are mitigated.

He said the insights of fact-finding engagements with the British consulate, the European Union and the government of India, which has devastating monsoons, will be of great benefit to the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

The MEC further said his department was working closely with the KZN Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs to find efficiency in early warning flood systems as well as the KZN Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs since infrastructure plays a critical role in economic development.

END.

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