

MEDIA STATEMENT-

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TAXPAYERS SUPPORT CALL FOR AN INDEPENDENT TAX OMBUD

Tax Ombud Judge Bernard Ngoepe’s call for the structural independence of the Office of the Tax Ombud (OTO) received a major boost today (4 February) when taxpayers, tax practitioners, civil society, tax industry bodies, academia, as well as representatives of private and public sector entities, expressed their full support.

Since being appointed as the first-ever Tax Ombud in October 2013, Judge Ngoepe has been a vocal advocate for the OTO to be independent of the South African Revenue Service (SARS). Today he received major support at the Mail & Guardian Critical Thinking Forum, dubbed *Seeking Structural Independence for the Office of the Tax Ombud*, which was held at the offices of Webber Wentzel in Sandton.

Judge Ngoepe said: “The overwhelming support expressed by our stakeholders today for the structural independence of the office is a step in the right direction. Stakeholders expressed their belief that an independent OTO will be better positioned to make a positive contribution to the country’s tax administration system and to help promote a healthy balance between SARS’ powers and taxpayers’ rights. I am hoping that this engagement will strengthen and speed up the process of the OTO becoming independent from SARS. I have written to various Finance Ministers about this issue over the past few years, without response. The outcome of today’s discussion will be compiled into a report to be used in support of this request. I am not going to rest until this office has attained structural independence.”

Issued on behalf of the Tax Ombud

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