

Eskom to probe racism allegations against De Ruyter

Eskom's board will probe allegations of racism made in the public domain against the power utility's group chief executive (GCE), Andre de Ruyter.



Eskom CEO, Andre de Ruyter

The Eskom board will appoint an independent senior counsel to conduct the investigation. This appointee will be empowered to interview any person that may be of assistance in the probe, and consider any evidence, and will then report back to the board and make a recommendation.

"The allegation not only brings Eskom into disrepute, but it also threatens to detract and distract the focus of the executive team and the GCE in particular from their critical job of restoring Eskom to operational and financial sustainability," an Eskom statement said.

"The board unanimously and unequivocally stands against racism and sexism, and for transformation and employment equity. Simultaneously, however, the board has instructed the executive to promote a high-performance culture to enable the critically important turnaround at Eskom to be delivered as soon as possible," the statement said.

Scopa investigation

Meanwhile, the parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Accounts (Scopa) said last week that it would investigate a complaint against De Ruyter, laid by Eskom's suspended chief procurement officer, Solly Tshitangano in a letter to public enterprises minister, Pravin Gordhan, in which he said De Ruyter and other managers were purging black-owned suppliers in favour of whiter-owned suppliers without following the correct procedures.

Scopa chairperson, Professor Malegapuru Makgoba said the reasons for the sending of this letter to Gordhan “arose when the chief executive officer confronted Mr Tshitangano about his performance”.

During the session, Gordhan sympathised with the difficulty of getting management to perform. “One of the difficult jobs of any CEO and perhaps even a board is to ensure that managers firstly, that report to him directly, secondly managers at a third or fourth level, perform according to their brief and their role definition. At this stage, I think it’s important that none of what anybody is saying means that aspersions are being cast on the integrity of the board or the CEO at this time.”

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