

Mboweni tells PIC board to leave the politics to him

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Mboweni tells PIC board to leave the politics to him Thando Maeko 25 Jul 2019 12:18 Finance Minister Tito Mboweni. (David Harrison/M&G) Comments Finance Minister Tito Mboweni has given assurances to the newly appointed interim board of the Public Investment Corporation (PIC) that he will not interfere with their work. The PIC manages more than R2-trillion in assets, the bulk of which are government employees' pension money. "I will not be attending your meetings don't worry about it. I will allow you to run your affairs without any fear or favour," he said. Mboweni made these remarks on Thursday at the first sitting of the new state asset managers interim board in Pretoria. The minister made the appointments in July following the mass resignation of the previous board in February. The board has been appointed for a period of twelve months. Members of the interim board include former Absa chief executive, Maria Ramos, general manager of the Public Servants Association (PSA), Ivan Friedrichs, and general secretary of the National Health and Allied Workers' Union (Nehawu), Zola Saphetha. Pitso Moloto and Xolani Mkhwanazi have been re-appointed. Notable exclusions from the board include the deputy minister of finance who has traditionally been appointed as the PIC's chairperson on behalf of the shareholder. Mboweni said the exclusion of the shareholder from the interim board follows a decision taken by Cabinet to exclude politicians from the PIC. During his testimony earlier this month at the commission probing alleged impropriety at the PIC, chaired by judge Lex Mpati, former chief executive Dan Matjila told the inquiry that during his tenure at the helm of the corporation he faced immense pressure from politicians to use PIC money to fund various projects. Matjila also told the commission that the frequent changes of the political head at the finance ministry negatively impacted on the activities of the PIC. "Cabinet has taken a decision that the chairperson of the board of directors of the Public Investment Corporation is not going to be the deputy finance minister of any other minister," Mboweni said. There is nothing in law that says that the deputy minister of finance should be elected as chair. In my view that was a bad practice," he said. The chairperson and deputy chairperson of the PIC will therefore be a non-executive director of the state-owned asset manager. The interim board is expected to elect a chairperson and deputy chairperson at Thursday's board meeting. Other issues on the agenda include constituting an audit committee and finalising the amendments of the Memorandum of Incorporation of the PIC..