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DEDECT hosts Provincial World Consumer Rights Day celebration in Matlosana

The North West Department of Economic Development, Environment, Conservation and Tourism (DEDECT), led by MEC Bitsa Lenkopane and Head of Department Mr Relebohile Mofokane, yesterday hosted the provincial World Consumer Rights Day celebration in Matlosana.

The event brought together government representatives, taxi associations, regulators, civil society organisations and industry stakeholders to raise awareness about consumer protection and strengthen collaboration in safeguarding consumer rights.

World Consumer Rights Day is commemorated annually across the globe to highlight progress made in advancing consumer rights, promoting consumer confidence and fostering a culture of responsible consumer behaviour. This year's celebration is held under the theme "Consumers' Right to Receive Goods that are Free from Defects," with the province placing particular focus on challenges faced by consumers in motor vehicle transactions, especially in the purchase of second-hand vehicles.

Delivering the keynote address, MEC Bitsa Lenkopane emphasised the importance of educating consumers about their rights and responsibilities when purchasing goods or entering into contractual agreements.

"The right to receive goods that are free from defects is a fundamental consumer right. Every consumer deserves quality, safety, dignity and honesty in the marketplace," said MEC Lenkopane.

She further noted that consumers across the province continue to face challenges, particularly with second-hand motor vehicles that are sold with hidden mechanical defects, undisclosed histories or faults that only become apparent shortly after purchase.

"These practices leave many consumers with unexpected repair costs, ongoing financial burdens and unnecessary hardship. As government, it is our responsibility to ensure that businesses operate fairly and that consumers are protected from unfair and unjust trade practices," she added.

MEC Lenkopane also outlined the critical role played by the North West Provincial Consumer Affairs Court, which continues to provide relief to consumers through dispute resolution, mediation and the enforcement of consumer protection legislation.

She further referenced a recent case where the court ruled in favour of a consumer who had purchased a defective motor vehicle. Following an investigation and mediation process by the Consumer Affairs Office, the court ordered that the sale agreement be cancelled and that the consumer be refunded the purchase price.

“This case demonstrates that the Consumer Affairs Court remains a vital platform for justice, ensuring that suppliers are held accountable and that consumers receive redress when their rights are violated,” MEC Lenkopane said.

The event was held in partnership with key stakeholders including View 4 You, the Motor Industry Ombudsman of South Africa (MIOSA), the National Credit Regulator (NCR), the National Consumer Tribunal (NCT), the National Financial Ombud Scheme South Africa (NFO), the South African Police Service (SAPS), as well as the Klerksdorp Motor Dealership Association.

The Department further indicated that it will intensify compliance inspections in the motor industry through collaborative efforts with stakeholders, including SAPS, MIOSA and other national regulators, to ensure that dealerships comply with consumer protection legislation and that unsafe or defective vehicles are not sold to communities.

In addition to enforcement efforts, DEDECT will continue to expand consumer education and awareness campaigns across the province, particularly targeting vulnerable and rural communities, to ensure that consumers are informed about their rights and the mechanisms available to report unfair practices.

Consumers are also urged to exercise responsible consumer behaviour by reading and understanding contractual agreements before signing and by reporting defective goods within the six-month statutory period provided for in the Consumer Protection Act.

Ends.

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