



REFERENCE: 1/3/1

ENQUIRIES: Bronwynne Jooste

Western Cape Government response to documentary on employment conditions in the South African wine industry

I have taken note of a documentary produced by a Danish filmmaker regarding employment conditions in the South African wine industry.

I view these allegations in a very serious light. I have directed my department to investigate the matter further and submit an interim report to my office within the next two weeks. The Western Cape Government stands firmly behind the rule of law in all cases.

The wine industry provides 289000 jobs in the country and is an important employer, especially in rural areas. To offer assistance to workers in the agriculture sector, the Western Cape Government has put in place a dedicated support unit which immediately investigates any instances of employee-employer grievances brought to its attention.

We have world-class wine farms and programs that ensure ethical and globally recognised best practice. Issues in this industry are not the norm, and we therefore take very seriously any matters raised with us.

With regard to the ongoing strike at the Robertson Winery, a delegation of four officials from Systembolaget visited the winery in September 2016.

The delegation spent three days in Robertson and met with the management of the winery, the unions, farmers and agri workers. The following issues were on the agenda and have been discussed in detail during their visit:

- The strike;
- Employment Equity Plan;
- Decent Working Hours;
- BSCI Cascade Effect;
- Labour Union Representatives on Farms; and
- Remediation Plan

At their closing meeting, Systembolaget assured Robertson Winery that operations at the estate are aligned to their standards. Systembolaget is preparing a report to this end.

The South African service organisation for wine producers and cellar members, VinPro, in collaboration with industry bodies, labour and the Western Cape Government, remains committed to sustainable development and will continue to engage with involved stakeholders, including Danish retail and the Swedish liquor authority, Systembolaget.

We will share the findings of the investigation as they become available.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Alan Winde', written in a cursive style.

Alan Winde
MEC of Economic Opportunities
(Responsible for Agriculture, Economic Development and Tourism)
Date: 26 October 2016