

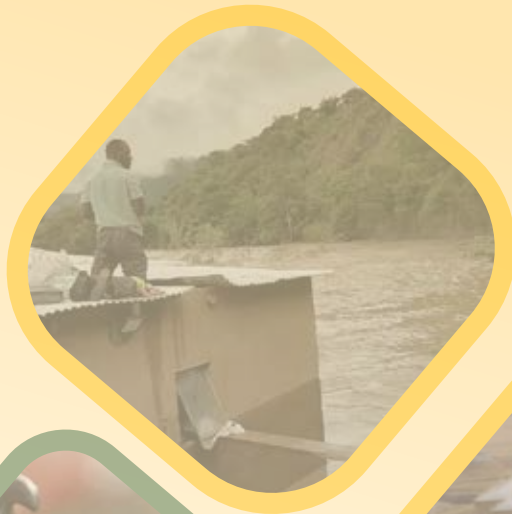
POLICY & BUDGET SPEECH 2023/24



co-operative governance
& traditional affairs
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



MPUMALANGA
THE PLACE OF THE RISING SUN



POLICY AND BUDGET SPEECH 2023/24



**SPEECH BY THE MEC FOR COGTA, HON. MJ MSIBI,
ON THE TABLING OF THE POLICY AND BUDGET SPEECH
IN THE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE**

DATE: 09 JUNE 2023

**Madam Speaker, Hon. MC Masilela;
Deputy Speaker, Hon. JL Mofokeng
Hon. Premier, Ms R.M Mtshweni-Tsipane
Leader of Government Business, Hon. MEC SK Mashilo
Colleagues in the Executive Council;
Hon. Members of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature;
Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on COGTA and Human Settlements, Hon. CG Shongwe;
Chairperson of the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) in Mpumalanga, Cllr. J Sidell;
Leader of the Governing Party, Chairperson Cde Mandla Ndlovu
Hon. Executive Mayors, Speakers, Chief Whips and Councillors;
Chairperson of the Mpumalanga House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders & President of CONTRALESA, Kgoshi LM Mokoena;
and Deputy-Chairperson: Inkosi MT Yende of the Mpumalanga Provincial House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders;
Director-General of Mpumalanga Provincial Government Mr Makhukhu Mampuru;
Management of the Department of COGTA, led by the Head, Mr Samukelo Ngubane;
Compatriots and fellow citizens.
Sanibonani, Dumelang, Avuxeni, Lotjhani**

INTRODUCTION

1. Somlomo lohloniphekile, ngiyabonga ngekunginika lelitfuba lekutsi ngetfule inkhulumo yencubo mgo-mo kanye nekuphakelwa kwetimali telitiko lekuBusa ngekuBambisana neTindzaba tebuholi bendzabuko, emyakeni losetulu wa 2023 kuya ku 2024.
2. We are nearing the end of the 6th Administration, with its own ups and downs. While the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality remain a plight on our democratic goals. The devastating COVID-19, the economic decline, the fight against the scourge of Gender- Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) and flood disasters have also dampened our spirits, we are still hopeful for a better tomorrow.
3. In the midst of all these problems we are encouraged by the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu when he said, ***“Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness.”*** We are also enjoined by Thomas Sankara’s remarks when he said, ***“The enemies of a people are those who keep them in ignorance.”*** To punctuate this further, we are also reminded of Dr JL Dube the 1st President of the African National Congress (ANC) who once remarked as part of growing and advancing our communities at large that we must always be mindful of the fact that ***“Isitha somuntu umuntu uqobo lwakhe”*** loosely translated to mean the enemy of a person is the person himself/herself.
4. These reminds us that we can only be enemies of our own people if we, ourselves do not take the plight of our people seriously and therefore hardly care for the interventions required. It is for this reason that this caring Government **as always, prioritizes the plight of our people and ensures that service delivery is put first, just as our people are put first and should never at any moment be left behind.** It is therefore our duty to enlighten our people in the quest for ensuring a safe passage from the bondage of being left behind. This Address shall account for the milestones that we have traversed to date since the dawn of our democratic dispensation.
5. Madam speaker, to be silent about the increasing number of the scourge of Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) and general lawlessness that have besieged our communities will be an injustice. It is therefore our duty to speak out and act against the perpetrators of these heinous and unbecoming behaviours. If We Leave No One Behind and Grow Mpumalanga Together, we will have a weapon that will propel us for a positive forward outlook.
6. The persistent murder of traditional leadership has once again robbed us ***Hhosi Clyde Mnisi*** of the ***Mnisi Traditional Council*** in Bushbuckridge and his wife, ***Charlene***, who were both assassinated in the most cold blooded brutal manner in April.
7. Again, Honourable members the institution of traditional leaders lost another member this week, Kgosi LE Mashego of the Thabakgolo Traditional Council, who led his community with dedication in pursuit of transforming traditional councils.
8. We wish to convey our heartfelt condolences to the Mnisi and Mashego Royal Families, as well as the entire Mpumalanga House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders representing all traditional leaders in the Province.

CONTEXT

STATE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

9. Madam Speaker, local government is and will always be the most important sphere of government due to its direct impact on the lives of all Communities. It is at the coal face of service delivery and it is where people can voice their concerns and have them addressed.
10. It has been a year since the last local government elections and the first year was generally stable with the few council instabilities that were identified in Nkomazi, Msukaligwa and Mkhondo municipalities. I am pleased to report that we have since overcome these challenges and that the municipalities are now relatively stable. We will continue to provide them with the necessary support so that they can deliver basic services.
11. Honourable members, strengthening municipal capacity and performance is critical in improving service delivery during the current term of local government. Based on the 2022 National State of Local Government assessment report, 66 municipalities have been identified as dysfunctional. Six of these municipalities in our Province are Lekwa, Msukaligwa, Dipaleseng, Govan Mbeki, Dr JS Moroka and Thaba Chweu. The challenges were mainly around good governance, financial management, filling of critical positions and political instability.
12. We are however concerned that the seventh municipality could as well be soon identified as Emalahleni due to the rolling systemic institutional challenges as well as service delivery lapses that have rendered the municipality non-responsive to the plight of its people. The recent spate of events where communities of Emalahleni especially Ezinambeni were left without electricity supply for the longest time towards the end of 2022 and again during the month of May 2023 due to electricity transformer that had totally collapsed for two successive sessions even after the municipality had replaced for the second time.
13. Of concern is the millions of rands that have been spent already with no evidence of value add for the money that was spent to stabilise power supply for the communities. It is also an adverse reflection that proper operations and maintenance for bulk infrastructure is not properly maintained as it is required for proper asset management.
14. This is also compounded by constant community complains around issues of reliable water supply that is hardly provided for longer periods by communities. Whilst we also acknowledge a myriad of challenges encountered by the institution, it is also of high concern that the leadership of the Municipality has provided less progressive direction in ensuring that these challenges are positively addressed.
15. We have sadly observed the unnecessary increase of community hostilities and protests in response to the void that has been created due to these service delivery deficiencies. Undoubtedly this is beginning to take a similar shape of the unwarranted deficiencies that are seriously observed and were identified in the Lekwa Local Municipality.
16. We must indicate that the Department shall not hesitate to take drastic measures and specific tailor-made interventions to ensure that communities in these Municipalities are salvaged from the leadership lapses and acute deterioration of service delivery that acts against what this Government has promised during the 2021 Local Government Elections.
17. Our Province has already developed specific Municipal Intervention Support Plans (MSIPs) to address the identified challenges. The Department is working with municipalities on the implementation of these interventions to improve amongst others; financial management, basic services, good governance, institutional capacity and capabilities to prioritize service delivery and involving our people on local government matters. I will be highlighting the prospects of these later in my speech and I am confident that when the next assessments are conducted our municipalities' performance will have improved.

- 18.** Over the years, we have scored remarkable success and learned valuable lessons that will assist us in improving the performance of our municipalities. In this regard, allow me Madam Speaker to focus on the following areas:

BUILDING CAPABLE AND ETHICAL STATE

- 19.** In order to build capable municipalities, we will ensure a transition to a more functional and integrated local government that is capacitated with professionals who are responsive and capable of addressing service delivery-related issues.
- 20.** Municipalities will be capacitated on financial management, project management and supply chain management in order to improve relations and efficiencies, as well as intergovernmental and citizen engagement as key enablers of this priority.
- 21.** Following the introduction of the Municipal Staff Regulations and the Local Government Municipal Systems Amendment Act, government has sought to professionalize municipalities. To this end, municipalities have made good progress in filling senior management positions with qualified, skilled and competent officials through a process strictly monitored by COGTA. The implementation of these staff regulations will ensure that we stabilize the administration at local government as all S56 posts are now permanent.
- 22.** As of 01 June 2023, **93 of the 124 senior management positions in municipalities were filled, with 31 still in the process of being filled. We are concerned about gender equity because 63 of the 93 positions are filled by men, while 30 are filled by women.** We have committed ourselves to prioritize this area of work in advancing the constitutional transformative recruitment processes that shall conform to reputable gender parity.
- 23.** Madam Speaker, I must also indicate that the Department will not accept the appointment of individuals who obtain a basic competency assessment of their skills in occupying senior positions. I have already refused to concur with at least four municipalities that made submissions and recommended the appointment of individuals with basic competency. This is in line with our regulatory framework and the previous pronouncements during SONA by His Excellency the President to support good governance through the recruitment of competent and skilled senior staff.
- 24.** Competency levels are in three categories, minimum being competent, intermediary being in the mid-centre and superior level being the most one can achieve. These categories are used to determine the salary level of senior managers, it therefore goes without saying that minimum entry notch applies to those with competent levels and the highest notches applied to superior competent levels.
- 25.** I have also observed that some municipalities do not adhere to the remuneration framework for senior managers when determining salary packages. The framework states unequivocally that candidates who have achieved basic competency level must be placed at the entry-level salary packages and municipalities must adhere to this. When I concur with the appointment of senior managers, I always indicate what package the incumbent must be paid, based on the competency results and deviating from this is illegal and the appointment may be declared null and void.
- 26.** Again, I have also become aware that municipalities are not conducting thorough vetting and verification of information provided on applicants' Curriculum Vitae (CVs), which can result in individuals being appointed based on incorrect information. I must say, any misrepresentation of the CV is a crime.
- 27.** Municipalities are once again urged to tighten their vetting and screening processes prior to making any appointments. These legislations and processes are intended to improve the quality of our local government system by ensuring that those appointed are appropriately qualified for those positions.

- 28.** Municipalities are once again reminded of the Local Government: Regulations on Appointment and Conditions of Employment of Senior Managers (2014): Regulation 14 (1) states that Screening of shortlisted candidates must take place within 21 days of the finalisation of shortlisting. I will henceforth scrutinize and ensure compliance by all municipalities to these regulations without fail. Opportunistic mediocre has now ended.

MUNICIPAL FINANCE

- 29.** Madam Speaker, good financial management is the backbone for the survival of our municipalities. For many years the Department did not have the Municipal Finance component to adequately monitor the financial performance of our municipalities. We are happy now that the Executive Council resolved that the Department must re-establish this directorate. We have embarked on the process of re-establishing this directorate, which we expect to be fully functional in the current financial year.
- 30.** Adoption of unfunded budgets is still a challenge for some of our municipalities. In simple terms, passing an unfunded budget means that the Municipality will be unable to meet all of its IDP commitments. We are working with Provincial Treasury to address this problem. Municipalities have been supported to develop budget funding plans, which aims at reducing the extent of unfunded budgets in municipalities.
- 31.** We are seeing some municipalities showing a reduction of unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure in Chief Albert Luthuli, Dipaleseng, Msukaligwa, Govan Mbeki, Thembisile Hani, Emakhazeni, Dr JS Moroka, Victor Khanye, Emalahleni, Nkomazi, Thaba Chweu and the City of Mbombela.
- 32.** What is most concerning is that municipalities are writing off large portions of these expenditures, with little consequence management. We call upon all municipalities to conduct thorough investigations and ensure that the perpetrators are held to account in full.
- 33.** The Department will monitor closely the operations of the Municipal Public Accounts Committees (MPACs) to hold municipalities and the executive to account for any unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditures as well as ensure the effective and efficient use of municipal resources.
- 34.** Madam Speaker, the audit outcomes of our municipalities remain a major concern in the Province. The stagnant audit report where two (2) District Municipalities obtained clean audit, nine (9) municipalities obtained unqualified audit outcomes, seven (7) municipalities obtained qualified audit opinions with one obtaining an adverse and the other obtaining a disclaimer audit opinion was not impressive.
- 35.** We will continue to monitor the implementation of the Integrated Audit Improvement Support Plan that has been approved by the Executive Council, as well as the full implementation of the audit action plans by all municipalities.
- 36.** The Auditor General has identified gaps in financial reporting, corporate governance, revenue management, infrastructure project management, performance reporting, compliance with laws and regulations and the internal control environment as challenges affecting service delivery in our municipalities. We are however working with the Provincial Treasury to assist all municipalities in responding to these challenges.
- 37.** Our mission is also to ensure that the three municipalities which are, Gert Sibande District, Steve Tshwete and Chief Albert Luthuli that have regressed in the past financial year do find their way towards improvement.
- 38.** Similarly, the perennial failures that have been displayed by Lekwa and Emakhazeni Municipality's audit outcomes are a reflection of bad governance and mishandling of public purse which should be improved without delays. For the past four financial years, Lekwa has obtained a disclaimer and Emakhazeni an adverse. It is clear that there are institutional challenges in these municipalities that cannot be allowed to continue.

- 39.** The monitoring of municipal performance needs further strengthening in the Province. To this end, we are currently developing a Municipal Monitoring Support IT System which will aid in measuring municipal performance as well as providing timely intervention and support. It will also provide access to the information needed to determine which municipalities require immediate assistance.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- 40.** Madam Speaker, it is critical to note that public participation is the fundamental pillar upon which our nascent democracy is founded with Ward Committees serving as an important mechanism for deepening local democracy and promoting accountability.
- 41.** To mitigate community unrest and protests, the Department has resuscitated the Provincial Community Concerns structure, which will monitor the response rate as well as ensuring that municipalities address the service delivery concerns raised. This structure comprises of all municipalities and sector departments and it is aimed at fast tracking responsiveness to service delivery blockages.
- 42.** It is mandatory that all Councillors should engage communities at ward level and that ward based IDPs interactions led by Executive Mayors and councillors shall take place without any compromise. As a result, no IDP should be adopted by councils or receive concurrence of the MEC if such prior evidence of interactions has not been provided.

PROVISION OF BASIC SERVICES

WATER AND SANITATION

- 43.** Honourable members, Mpumalanga is committed to providing basic services to all its communities. There has been a slight improvement in the number of households with access to water and sanitation.
- 44.** Additional efforts to increase access to water and sanitation have been made in this current municipal financial year ending in June 2023, with over **R2 billion** set aside for the provision of water and sanitation services through various municipal grant allocations, such as MIG, WSIG and RBIG.
- 45.** Madam Speaker, We are confident that access to water and sanitation will improve through continued investments in the bulk infrastructure. To date we have completed the following projects in local municipalities.

In Gert Sibande District

The infrastructure projects completed include;

- Installation of Bulk water line in Mkhondo to Forestview, Maphepheni, Malayinini and Rustplaas which have benefited 4 876 households.
- The Lusushwane 4ML/d Package Plant with bulk pipeline and the 5ML/d Water Treatment Works at Methula which benefitted 12 000 households in Robinsdale, Smithfield, Aandskomst, Houtbosch, Bet-tysGoed, Oshoek, Hartebeeskop, Ouboom and Bampoen in Chief Albert Luthuli Municipality.
- The upgrading of the Southern Water Treatment Works in Ermelo and the refurbishment of Water Treatment Works which benefitted areas such as Davel, Breyten and Sheepmoore.
- The upgrading of Elukwatini and Empuluzi Waste Water Treatment Works which benefitted Mayflower, Redhill, Slovo, Dundonald, Swallowsnest, Mayflower Gate, Glenmoore and Ntababomvu .
- The construction of Standerton bulk outfall sewer line in Standerton Ext 8
- The refurbishment of the Waste Water Treatment Plants in Davel, Breyten and Wesselton within Msu-kaligwa Municipality.

46. Madam Speaker, the Lekwa sewer spillages have been with us for sometimes thus inviting unrelenting public outcry. A special intervention by the injection of **R350 million** in Lekwa Municipality to address sewer spillages was allocated for the 2022/23 financial year for this purpose. The project is at construction stage and it includes the upgrading of Rooikoppen Sewer internal reticulation, upgrading of sewer pipeline, Standerton Ext 8 bulk sewer pipeline and for the attention to the upgrading of the Standerton Waste Water Treatment Plant to avoid further spillages to the Vaal River.

47. As we speak now, the Minister of Water and Sanitation, Mr Senzo Mchunu, is on site visiting those projects to ensure that the work is being carried out.

In Nkangala District

The infrastructure projects completed include:

- The construction of 5ML/day Bundu Weir, WTW, 10km Bulk Water Pipeline, 10 ML/day Reservoir and 4ML/day reservoir at Vlaklaagte and bulk water pipeline in Moloto within Thembisile Hani Municipality
- The refurbishment of Eastern and Western Sewer Oxidation Ponds in KwaMhlanga which benefitted 2 774 households as well as the refurbishment of Tweefontein Waste Water Treatment Works in Thembisile Hani Municipality.
- The Roman Pump Station in Siyathuthuka which benefitted 2 740 households in Emakhazeni Municipality.
- The refurbishment of Riverview Waste Water Treatment Works which benefitted Klarinet, Dieheuwel, Blanchville, and Jacarro Park in Emalahleni Municipality.

48. The upgrading and refurbishment of Delmas Waste Water Treatment Works for Victor Khanye Local Municipality, as well as the construction of the 20 ML/day Loskop Regional Bulk Water Supply scheme at a cost of **R1.9 billion**, will supplement current demand with an additional 20 ML/day at Thembisile Hani Municipality.

49. We are currently planning the construction of Rust De Winter Regional Bulk Water Scheme that will augment the bulk water shortage with 10 ML/ day in the Dr JS Municipality in the Moretele areas.

In Ehlanzeni District

The infrastructure projects completed include;

- The Injaka/ Marite Bulk Line to Cuning Moore A & B phase 2 which benefitted 3 000 households in Bushbuckridge Municipality.
- Various bulk water Infrastructure in areas such as Orinocco, Tintswalo, Buffelshoek, Masoganeng, Jerusalem, Bafaladi, Masioneng benefitted 9 582 households, in Bushbuckridge Municipality.
- The Hoxane Bulk Water Scheme which benefitted 81 014 households covering 9 wards which includes 33 villages in the City of Mbombela.
- The replacement of Asbestos Cement (AC) pipes in Sabie to improve water reliability benefitted Simile, Harmony Hill and Sabie businesses in Thaba Chweu Municipality.
- The refurbishment of Mkhuhlu Waste Water Treatment Works in Bushbuckridge Municipality.
- The Construction of Thekwane South Outfall Sewer which benefitted 1 414 households for the people of Thekwane South in the City of Mbombela.
- The completed water reticulation projects has benefitted 22 049 households in 12 wards covering 30 villages, in Bushbuckridge Local Municipality.

50. The current ongoing construction of the Nsikazi Water Scheme will provide an additional 20 ML/day to various villages within the Nsikazi Area, as well the construction of the Sibange, Naas and Driekoppies Bulk Water Schemes, which will benefit various villages within the Nkomazi Area. These projects are expected to be completed in June 2024.

- 51.** All of these projects that have been completed since 2019 totaling more than **R1 billion** are investments towards the improvement of quality of life for our people as this caring government had committed from the start of its Term.
- 52.** The current concern on Cholera Outbreak countrywide that has left 31 fatalities thus far could not leave Mpumalanga immune from the statistics. One fatality was unfortunately recorded in the area of Dr JS Moroka Municipality. We have since ensured that all municipalities embark on testing their water quality at least on a daily and weekly frequency basis.
- 53.** Chemical stockpiles for chlorine dosages, 24 hours availability of our water treatment plant process controllers and risk Mitigation and Abatement Plan are in place at all times to ensure the safe operation of our plants. Strict adherence to these will ensure that our people have access to safe and clean water at all times.

ELECTRICITY PROVISION

- 54.** Despite the good news of the increased access to electricity from 90.1% in 2019 and 92% in 2021 in the Province, we are still experiencing shortages of electricity supply. Whilst grappling with continued load shedding, communities are advised to use electricity sparingly and to introduce energy saving devices in their day-to-day life patterns.
- 55.** Municipalities have also been advised to consider the implementation of alternative energy measures to ensure that there is backup power supply for the operation of essential infrastructure such as Water Treatment Works during load shedding. We are therefore, convinced that working with the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE) we will find solution towards the implementation of alternative energy to augment Eskom power supply to various municipalities.
- 56.** We welcome National Government's attempts to provide interventions, through mixed solutions such as the Just Energy Transition (JET) and the coal fired electricity generation which should yield positive impact on climate change and its environment whilst adding on the generation capacity of the country in order to confront the scourge of load shedding.
- 57.** We also applaud the call by National Government for municipalities to submit applications towards Eskom Debt Relief to alleviate the pressure that all our municipalities are faced with, in coping with both historical accumulated debt and the compounding effects of load shedding. We encourage all municipalities to submit their applications before the end of June 2023.

SOLID WASTE REMOVAL AND CLEAN ENVIRONMENT

- 58.** In a bid to have a clean and green environment, refuse removals should be carried out regularly. Currently, the number of households with access to refuse removal has increased from 37.5% in 2019 to 40% in 2021. The Department is pleased to announce that the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) framework has been revised to allow municipalities to procure solid waste removal trucks through MIG allocation to improve access to refuse removal.
- 59.** Municipalities such as Chief Albert Luthuli, Msukaligwa, Lekwa and Bushbuckridge have already procured their waste removal trucks whereas Thembisile Hani is still in a process of finalizing the procurement of their fleet through MIG.
- 60.** For this financial year, only **R62 million** has been set aside through MIG for waste removal fleet and infrastructure. These include waste removal truck for Nkomazi; construction of the Barberton landfill site in the City of Mbombela, construction of a transfer station and recycling buyback centre in Thaba Chweu and the completion of the Leeuwpoot landfill site in Emalahleni Municipality.

- 61.** Honourable members, as part of the government's waste removal initiatives, we implemented the Presidential Employment Stimulus project, which benefited Chief Albert Luthuli and Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme Local Municipalities. This was accomplished through the implementation of an Innovative Solid Waste Management Programme at a cost of **R14 million**.
- 62.** For the program's long-term viability, the Department is working with these municipalities to mobilize the private sector and other potential investors for support. In this regard, to sustain the job opportunities created through this project, the participants in Chief Albert Luthuli Municipality were absorbed by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment. The same is expected in Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme municipality. We will continue in ensuring that the Youth Waste Management Project (YWMP) is extended to Nkomazi, Bushbuckridge, Dipaleseng and in addition for this year Dr JS Moroka Municipality.
- 63.** We will also continue with the Community Works Programme (CWP) in attracting more than 26 000 job opportunities for the 2023/24 FY. A total of more than 30 000 job opportunities are expected to be created as part of our current years' job massification primarily sourced from CWP, MIG and YWMP.

MUNICIPAL ROADS INFRASTRUCTURE

- 64.** We acknowledge that most of our municipalities are behind in the rehabilitation of roads infrastructure. In the 2022/23 financial year, the Province prioritized **R687 million** which is 34% of the MIG allocation to roads and storm water projects. For the current financial year, **R700 million** has been set aside through MIG to respond to the challenges of roads infrastructure networks across municipalities.

NKOSI CITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

- 65.** We are championing the Nkosi City Development Project, which aims at developing land through the provision of social infrastructure, provision of government services, amenities and multiple land uses constituting an integrated human settlement development with approximately 3 400 housing opportunities.
- 66.** The project has been successfully registered with Infrastructure South Africa (ISA) for possible **R8 billion** funding and the processes towards receiving the funding are at advance final stages. These funds will be used to assess and install available bulk infrastructure options. The developer is currently working on partnership agreements to ensure that land parcels for private development are made.
- 67.** We have started with a process of assisting Nkosi City community, particularly the Youth, in establishing co-operatives in construction services, safety and security, supply of goods and services, tourism services, brick making, plumbing services, electrical services, public transportation, crops, livestock farming, sand mining and others. These process is linked to upskilling of the youth through SETA intervention programmes in the relevant sectors.
- 68.** With the first crucial project milestone of Township Establishment already dealt with and pegging activities to demarcate the land parcels for proper development, it shall then follow that additional infrastructure such as, roads; bulk water, sanitation and electricity provision including the actual construction of a variety of mega sub-projects as per the designs shall be pursued accordingly through various sources of funding which have been pledged.
- 69.** On completion of this project the people of Nkosi City, especially those covered in the Nkosi City Community Property Association (NCCPA) shall enjoy the fruits of our democracy and its realities of eliminating poverty, unemployment and inequalities. The project has already attracted the attention of the National Government and is destined to break new grounds as the first mega city created since our democracy in the Province.

ACTIONS SUPPORTIVE OF INTEGRATED HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

- 70.** As part of densification and intensification of towns and settlements, the Province has partnered with the Development Bank of Southern Africa to subdivide under-developed land through township establishment processes in Msukaligwa and Lekwa municipalities. This work is continuous and complements the efforts by the Department of Human Settlements.
- 71.** The implementation of the Mpumalanga Provincial Spatial Development Framework has been facilitated by ensuring that sector departments' Annual Performance Plans incorporate programmes and projects identified in the priorities of the MPSDF.
- 72.** We are working with the Department of Human Settlements to ensure that municipalities plan for bulk infrastructure for all planned integrated human settlements. In this regard, using the District Development Model proper spatial planning of settlements shall help deal with illegal land invasion and vandalism to infrastructure by people who have illegitimately placed themselves on pieces of land that are without proper basic services. Executive Mayors have been advised to take keen interest in ensuring that instruments such as the Land Use Schemes are implemented appropriately to deal with this improper scourge.

DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT MODEL (DDM) AND INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING (IDP)

- 73.** Madam Speaker, the Province is now implementing the DDM One Plans through its Provincial One Plan which incorporates DDM programmes and catalytic projects which are also part of the Mpumalanga Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (MERRP).
- 74.** In responding to the challenge of unfunded catalytic projects and programmes in the DDM One Plans, the Executive Council has approved the Public Private Growth Initiative (PPGI) Operational Framework/Model in the pilot impact zone of Ehlanzeni District.
- 75.** The purpose of the PPGI is to promote rapid growth in the South African economy by creating an investment - friendly environment that promotes ease of business, to rebuild and strengthen a relationship of trust and co-operation between the public and private sector. It also fosters an inclusive economy that encourages emerging entrepreneurs to benefit from the entire value-chain of economic activity.
- 76.** The Ehlanzeni District and PPGI have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate with the private sector on projects of mutual interest.
- 77.** Madam Speaker, the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) has adopted the Ehlanzeni and Gert Sibande districts with their local municipalities as part of their “**Adopt A District Approach**” through the **Partner-A-District Programme**, in the spirit of the DDM.
- 78.** The DBSA has also formed several partnerships with the private and public sectors in areas of mutual interest, with the goal of supporting local government in strengthening their capacity and contributing to improved service delivery.
- 79.** In collaboration with the Bank's partners, the Partner-A District Programme, will focus on facilitating initiatives that address the following strategic priorities within the benefiting districts, infrastructure development and management support, infrastructure investment to catalyze local economic transformation, local economic development, and institutional capacity development and governance.
- 80.** For this purpose, this programme shall serve as yet another relief to provide upfront funding for all major infrastructure to be accelerated and all other economic transformative interventions to stimulate the economic growth at a district level. The municipalities in the Nkangala District area shall be given a chance to also participate during the course of their new financial year 2023/24. These are further measures by government and the DBSA to accelerate delivery not later but now

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

81. Madam Speaker, the current state of global warming has an impact on weather patterns and disrupts the usual balance of nature. This poses many risks to human and all other forms of life on earth. The phenomenon of climate change necessitates a collaborative effort by communities and government to mitigate risks and implement coordinated response measures.
82. During the previous Tropical Cyclone Eloise and the subsequent severe weather conditions, we were able to rehabilitate a large number of damaged infrastructure in the Province including the Kanyamazane Bridge that was jointly reconstructed with the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport.
83. Honourable members, in November 2022, a number of municipalities in the three districts were affected by heavy rains and hailstorm. The infrastructure that was damaged included 7 schools, a clinic, over 200 houses, an agricultural plantation, an electricity network, roads and the Mkhondo Agri-Hub. The City of Mbombela was the hardest hit municipality.
84. Again in February this year we have experienced yet another devastating floods in almost all of the villages/wards in Nkomazi, City of Mbombela, Bushbuckridge and Thaba Chweu Municipalities.
85. These floods have also caused significant damages to infrastructure in municipalities such as Thembisile Hani, Emakhazeni, Dr JS Moroka, Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme, Mkhondo, Chief Albert Luthuli, Lekwa and Msukaligwa. As a result, 14 people lost their lives of which 2 bodies were since never recovered during the disaster. **May their souls rest in peace.**
86. Madam Speaker, following the declaration of the national disaster by the Minister of CoGTA, an assessment on the damages was conducted, with an estimated cost of **R2, 3 billion**. We are still waiting for a response from the National Disaster Management Centre regarding the provincial disaster grant application.
87. We believe that once the funding from the National Disaster Management is received, more infrastructure rehabilitation programs will be implemented.
88. Madam Speaker, we will be developing a **Provincial Flood Management Strategy** to enable the Province to respond to flood disasters more effectively. This strategy will aid in the identification of flood-prone areas, as well as specific areas where settlements and households should be relocated in the event of floods taking place in the Province. This will be another measure of proactively saving lives from being swept away by the torrential rains and storms that are occasionally encountered during the summer season.
89. Mpumalanga is prone to veld fires, which can threaten both human lives and natural vegetation. Now that winter has arrived, any veld fires have the potential to turn into a disaster. I want to reassure the House that our disaster management structures are ready to deal with any fire outbreak that endangers human lives, natural vegetation and the eco-system.
90. Many people rely heavily on braziers (Timbawula) during winter season. These domestic fires caused by braziers are common with children being the most common victims. Working on Fire, a firefighting organisation with a team of specialized fire fighters, has contributed to our increased preparedness. As the fire season approaches, we rely on these men and women, in addition, to the current municipal capacity to protect human lives, wild animals and the sustainability of our livelihoods.
91. In order to improve municipalities' ability to respond to fire incidents in a timely manner, we will provide fully equipped Double Cab Rapid Response firefighting vehicles to Lekwa, Nkomazi, Chief Albert Luthuli, Dipaleseng and Thaba Chweu.

OUR SUPPORT TO THE INSTITUTION OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS

- 92.** Madam Speaker, South Africa is a constitutional state that is founded on the values of human dignity, equality, and the advancement of human rights and freedoms. It also calls for the establishment of a democratic government committed to achieving equality between men and women of all races.
- 93.** I am therefore pleased to announce that the royal families have, in accordance with their customary law of succession, appointed the following senior traditional leaders who were accordingly recognized by the Honourable Premier during the 2022/23 financial year:
- **Ikosi Sipho Sydney Mahlangu of the Ndzundza Mabusa Traditional Council;**
 - **Hosi Abednigo Nxumalo of the Amashangana Traditional Council**
 - **Inkhosi Misisizwe Sandile Mnisi of the Mantjolo Traditional Council;**
 - **Inkhosi Khuzulwandle Nhlanhla Malaza of the Mandlamakhulu Traditional Council;**
 - **Inkhosi Peter Richard Nkosi of the Ebutsini Traditional Council**
 - **Kgosigadi Clara Bontle Mashile of the Mashilane Traditional Council.**
- 94.** Honourable members, it is public knowledge that on May 30, 2023, the constitutional court declared the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act, 2019 (Act No.3 of 2019) invalid as the National Assembly and Provincial Legislatures failed to comply with its obligation to adequately facilitate public participation and consultations. It is important to note that the Constitutional Court has suspended the order for 24 months to allow parliament to re-enact the statute in accordance with the Constitution. The department will be participating during the consultation process.
- 95.** We are continuously supporting our Traditional Leaders with the tools of trade they need to better serve their communities. This support is aimed at providing infrastructure development and enhancement of Traditional Council offices in order to provide services to traditional communities in a conducive working environment.
- 96.** Madam Speaker, the project of renovation and construction of some Traditional Council offices is progressing very well, however there were delays due to heavy rains that caused disasters in the fourth quarter of the previous financial-year.
- 97.** The work will now continue in the 2023/24 financial year with an additional 9 Traditional Councils offices. The appointments of the contractors and project managers have been finalised and they are already on site to ensure that these offices are ready for occupation.
- 98.** I am also pleased, Madam Speaker to announce that a young woman contractor, Zemanqce was the first to have done the sterling job by completing the Hoxane Traditional Council Offices at 100%.The quality and neatness of the job completed makes one appreciate the type of investment we are laying behind and the skills this Government has brought about through our young women. I believe she is in the Gallery and we would like her to stand and be acknowledged for her good work.
- 99.** We have also scored some progress in the other areas for instance the Duma,Jongilanga, Madabukela, Mathibela, Ndzundza Pungutsha, Mohlala Morudi and Ndzundza Mabusa offices are above 80% completion.
- 100.** As was announced recently by the Hon.Premier during the Opening of the House, we will be ensuring that furniture is installed in all completed offices by the Department and the premises are fenced as a matter of urgency through the assistance of Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs (DARDLEA), with their current capacity and budget for now and we shall seek to continue on our own for the future.

- 101.** In total, we have set ourselves to complete 23 new Traditional Council Offices, where 14 are coming from the previous financial year and 9 were planned for the 2023/24 financial year with 18 Traditional Council Offices which would also be renovated this year.
- 102.** Financial support for cultural ceremonies like imimemo to bolster pride and confidence in our traditions will receive **R200 000** and **R350 000** for operational grant for all Traditional Councils with senior Traditional Leaders per annum. The allocation for Kings is **R 1 million** and their Cultural Grant is **R 400 000** per annum. We will use our departmental policies and the PFMA as tools to provide guidance and monitor the proper use of these grants. Other tools of trade include continued provision of vehicles, desktop computers, printers, tablets and data for smooth operations of the Traditional Councils and the Provincial and Local House Committees.
- 103.** We pride ourselves in the support we provide to our Traditional Leaders as other Provinces are benchmarking from us for best practices.

THE PROVINCIAL INITIATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE (PICC)

- 104.** Madam Speaker, the deaths of our initiates is another matter that necessitates continued collaboration with the Department of Health and other stakeholders. We are also concerned about the mushrooming of illegal schools that are non-compliant with the Mpumalanga Ingoma Act of 2021 and the Customary Initiation Act of 2021. We all respect the Ingoma culture, which has been and will always be a pillar of our indigenous knowledge.
- 105.** As the institution of traditional leadership, we must stand firm against the abuse of our culture. At the same time, promote and protect the cultural practices and traditions that have bound our people together for centuries. Let us remain firmly bound to all that is noble and worthy in our past.
- 106.** We have noted with great concern the problems created by illegal initiation schools and unnecessary deaths caused where a total of 17 fatalities were sustained in the 2022/23 financial year. We are urging communities to work with government and report these bogus initiation schools where they are established. Despite this, thousands of initiates have successfully and safely completed this traditional rite of passage.
- 107.** Madam Speaker, the establishment of the PICC had a significant impact on the closure of illegal initiation schools, improvement to proper and successful registration of legally recognized and health approved Ingoma Schools. Traditional leaders together with government have conducted rigorous awareness campaigns and monitored the operation of the initiation schools to ensure that illegal schools are shut down.
- 108.** Recently the good work of the PICC has led to seventeen teenage initiates being rescued and the arrest of the owner of an illegal school in Kriel. The PICC must be applauded for this sterling work and be encouraged to continue with the good work
- 109.** The PICC will continue conducting awareness campaigns and training workshops for traditional and Khoi-San leadership structures and government officials as prescribed by section 15 (1) (a) 12 of the Customary Initiation Act no. 2 of 2021.
- 110.** Over and above that, they will collaborate with local structures established within the districts where Ingoma is practiced. The National Department of Traditional Affairs will provide training for the PICC before any initiation school opens. In consultation with all Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership, the PICC will also create a database for all legally approved initiation schools in the Province.

RECONSTITUTION /CONSTITUTION OF TRADITIONAL COUNCILS

- 111.** Madam Speaker, Section 63(4) of the TKLA states that all tribal authorities and traditional councils must be re-constituted within two years from the commencement of the Act. However, Amakhosi countrywide have taken a posture to halt the reconstitution project until valid issues of concerns raised have been addressed by Government.
- 112.** We believe that by working together, both Amakhosi and Government can amicably resolve these issues. Hence we have again prioritised this project for this financial year as this is a legislative mandate that must be adhered to by all provinces at least within the suspended period of 24 months by the Constitutional Court as its only lifeline left for now.
- 113.** We are in the process of appointing two Committees: an Ad-Hoc Committee that will resolve land-related issues and an Investigative Committee that will focus on Traditional Leadership Disputes and Claims in Mpumalanga Province in terms of the TKLA. These Committees shall among other assist in dealing with succession battles and to resolve geographical boundaries that are in dispute among the Traditional Councils
- 114.** We are also going to prioritize the succession disputes that is currently taking place in The Hoxane Traditional Council. We have already started with the interaction among the members of the Royal Family and were are poised to have this finally addressed within the next three months of the current financial year.

INTEGRATED AND COORDINATED WORK WITH OTHER DEPARTMENTS

- 115.** Honourable Members, it is critical for traditional leaders and government to work together to successfully deliver services to our traditional communities. We oppose working in silos and advocate for resource efficacy in order to achieve greater impact with fewer resources.
- 116.** We have formalised our working relationship with the National Department of Rural Development and Land Reform as well as its provincial Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs by entering into a Memorandum of Understanding. This initiative has far reaching milestones in uplifting the quality of life for the traditional communities. By making land available for agricultural purposes such as, crop production, livestock farming, mining activities and all other agro-processing and manufacturing ventures that are in line with the Invest Rural Strategy and Framework.
- 117.** As part of food security efforts, the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs will provide each traditional homestead with a 30metre x 10metre greenhouse tunnel, equipped with 280 climate smart agriculture boxes for controlled climate and water efficient food gardening. In addition vegetables produced, will be procured directly from the traditional households for our school government nutrition programme as additional income to sustain them.
- 118.** Madam Speaker, the Municipal Structures Amendment Act 3 of 2021 and the Traditional and Khoi San Leadership Act 3 of 2019 requires the Province's three Local Houses of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders to elect Senior Traditional Leaders to participate in Municipal Councils. I therefore would like to encourage traditional leaders to participate in municipal affairs.

- 119.** The Nkangala and Gert-Sibande Districts have already supported the selection of Senior Traditional Leaders to participate in both Local and District Municipal Council sittings. We applaud their move that support community development. Whilst on the other hand, we have acknowledged that there are other Amakhosi who had reservations about the amended Section 81, which reduces the number of Senior Traditional Leaders allowed to participate in Municipal Council sittings. Madam Speaker, let me assure the House that the matter is under scrutiny for further considerations by the Minister of COGTA Hon. Thembi Nkandimeng.
- 120.** We appreciate the ongoing efforts of Amakhosi to participate in structures such as Ward Committees and Integrated Development Plans (IDPs). We encourage this kind of cooperation as it helps in bridging the gap between Traditional Communities and Government.

LAND INVASION IN TRADITIONAL COMMUNITIES

- 121.** Madam Speaker, land invasion remains a serious threat to the development of our rural communities. It has a very unfavourable economic impact on various areas of service delivery such as land allocation for agricultural purposes and for proper human settlement. In most cases, these invasions take place in areas that were targeted for agriculture.
- 122.** It is worrying that land, initially and historically demarcated for agriculture, gets changed to human settlements without proper approval. There should be a working relationship between these communities and the authorities to avert the challenges of the perpetuation of poverty, unemployment and inequality.
- 123.** Honourable Members, in order to have a sustainable solution to this land grabbing; there should be a collaboration between sector Departments, led by COGTA, the Traditional leaders and SAPS through an MoU. To this end, cases of illegal invasion at Nyongane, Karino and Emkhatsini around Ehlanzeni, in Moloto, Verena and KwaMhlanga area around Nkangala are just but a few examples that have drawn traction for our solidified action against land invasion. More action on law enforcement and proper allocated areas for human settlement warrants further action.
- 124.** The price we pay when people are settled in areas less appropriate for habitation is massive. We have seen with the recent floods that people settled on flood lines are not secured and cannot be protected. Usually, their houses would be built right in the dry river plains which become flooded when it rains heavily.
- 125.** Good measures through the Spatial Planning Land Use Management and other Land Use Schemes should be put into action to avoid dilapidation and destruction of settlement plans in all our areas.
- 126.** We urge all those involved with the allocation of sites to ensure that no person or family is allocated in the danger zones and flood plains where lives and property would be lost. COGTA shall cause for a register or Database in all Traditional Council areas to be opened for inspection for all new households that would be settled in the properly demarcated areas allocated in the right piece of land for habitation. The Traditional Leaders will be capacitated with good governance when issuing permission to occupy (PTOs) which must be in line with dully accepted and recognized customs of the area.
- 127.** All residents found not in compliance may be an indication that they were not allocated accordingly. They are illegal and should basically be removed. It is in the same areas where unknown illegal occupants often are breeding havens of crime like those who are attacking our tourists and engaging in heinous crimes of GBVF and so on. The Provincial Commissioner has no other choice but to invest serious resources to address these crimes as they start from as little as land invasion to serious unthought of brutality.

- 128.** We are aware that due to various challenges SAPS is often not acting promptly when cases of land invasion are reported, leading to these crimes seriously perpetuated. Both DCSSL and SAPS should act and act without fear or favour if we are to protect the historical sacred status of our land under the traditional leaders. Enough is enough.

AGRARIAN REVOLUTION

- 129.** Madam Speaker, agrarian revolution requires us to move from the old way of conducting agriculture to a significant improvement in cultivating plants and raising animals. These innovative efforts will undoubtedly be aided by Traditional and Khoi-San leadership implementing the Invest Rural Masterplan which is a guide for partnering in socio-economic development initiatives in rural communities.
- 130.** We have made progress in that some private partners have already shown great interest in the implementation of the program and have pledged to implement agrarian projects especially in rural areas under traditional leadership. Therefore, skilling our people becomes critical for project implementation and market access for the products sourced through this intervention.
- 131.** The Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MPTA) has also partnered with Provincial House of Traditional Leaders on the implementation of Game Farming which also has great potential for job creation and economic development in areas under traditional leadership in the Province. We are convinced that through these programs, the lives of rural people will change for the better.
- 132.** Siyetsembe kutsi lomkhankhaso utawugucula timphilo tebantfu, kulwisana nekweswelakala kwemisebenti, buphuya kanye nekungalingani kutemnotfo.

CONCLUSION

- 133.** Somlomo lohloniphekile, ngitsandza kubonga bonkhe laba bambe lichaza ngekusisekela kwabo silitiko lekuBusa ngekuBambisana neBuholi bendzabuko, ngemisebenti yabo leminhle yekuqondzisa lelitiko ngendlela lefanele. Siyakholelwa ekutseni nasibambisene nato tonkhe tinhlangothi tentfutuko sitawuphumelela ekutfukiseni imiphakatsi kulesifundza setfu.
- 134.** It is therefore my honour and privilege to table the Department's budget, and I humbly request that the House approves the amount of **R 800.808 million (Eight Hundred Million Eight Hundred and Eight Thousand Rands)** for the 2023/24 financial year, as follows:
- **PROGRAMME 1: ADMINISTRATION- R 168 480 000** (One Hundred and Sixty Eight Million, Four Hundred and Eighty Thousand Rands).
 - **PROGRAMME 2: LOCAL GOVERNANCE- R 287 525 000** (Two Hundred and Eighty Seven Million, Five Hundred and Twenty Five Thousand Rands).
 - **PROGRAMME 3: DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING- R 66 415 000** (Sixty Six Million, Four Hundred and Fifteen Thousand Rands).
 - **PROGRAMME 4: TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONAL MANAGEMENT- R 255 783 000** (Two Hundred and Fifty Five Million, Seven Hundred and Eighty Three Thousand Rands).
 - **PROGRAMME 5: HOUSE OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS- R 22 605 000** (Twenty-Two Million, Six Hundred and Five Thousand Rands).

Madam Speaker, let me conclude by expressing my gratitude to my family for their unwavering support in the course of my service to the people of Mpumalanga. I would also like to appreciate the Honourable Premier, Ms Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane and the African National Congress (ANC) for entrusting me with the responsibility of leading the Department of COGTA.

Allow me to take this opportunity to invite all members of the opposition and stakeholders to work together with the governing party to find solutions to all of our challenges confronting our municipalities.

“Let’s grow Mpumalanga together”

I Thank you

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