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## **MEDIA STATEMENT PRESENTED BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL SPOKESPERSON, HON. MEC THULASIZWE THOMO ON THE OCCASION OF THE POST-EXCO LEKGOTLA MEDIA BRIEFING.**

**DATE: 27 FEBRUARY 2026**

**VENUE: MBOMBELA**

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- Programme Director,
- Members of the Media fraternity joining us this afternoon.
- Colleagues and friends.
- Good afternoon, Sanibonani, Lotjani, Dumelang, Avhuxeni.

1. Today marked the second and last day of our Executive Council Lekgotla, convened by the Premier, Mr Mandla Ndlovu.
2. This is where we are conducting an extensive assessment of government work, focusing on among others, the State of Local Government, our Nine Months Performance, the Audit Outcomes of our Departments, the State Entities and Local Government.
3. Our Lekgotla will be incomplete without dealing with the crux of the issues, which our communities are raising on a daily basis when we interact with them, be it through public participation programmes or media platforms, that is the socio-economic conditions, of unemployment and high poverty levels, as well as service delivery challenges.

4. The three priorities of the 7<sup>th</sup> Administration, namely: Driving inclusive growth and job creation, reducing poverty and high cost of living, building a capable, ethical and developmental state, as well as the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP), were the guiding principles and assessment tools.
5. **Day 1** of the Lekgotla focused on Audit Outcomes, National Dialogue, the Provincial Budget, the State of Local Government, Progress Report on Response to Provincial Disasters.

### **5.1 Audit Outcomes.**

- Three Departments, namely: Office of the Premier, Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) and Provincial Treasury have achieved clean audits for the 2024/25 financial year. The Nkomazi Special-Economic Zone (SEZ) is also on the list of clean audit achievers.
- In Local Government, Ehlanzeni District has maintained the achievement over a number of years.
- The Lekgotla has observed that central to the non achievement of clean audits, is the persistent control weaknesses and limited accountability, as punctuated by the Auditor-General's office.
- Clean audit outcomes are an essential ingredients of public trust in government's use of public funds in line with financial prescripts.

- The Lekgotla therefore resolved that all institutions must implement all audit action plans for the realisation of this target.
- It was agreed that through established support mechanism of the Office of the Premier, the Provincial Treasury, COGHSTA and SALGA, clean audits must be achieved.

## **5.2 National Dialogue**

- The Lekgotla noted that the National Dialogue which the President, His Excellency, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa announced in the 2025 State of the Nation Address has started, and all sectors of the society should participate.
- The objectives of the Dialogue are in the main, underpinned by the following principles of inclusivity, ensuring that every sector, every community, and every demographic has a seat at the table - from business to labour, from political parties to grassroots activists, from the rural unemployed to the urban informal trader. No voice must be excluded, and no voice must dominate.
- These include but not limited to, transparency and accountability, to build trust through openness in how decisions are made, how resources are managed, and how outcomes are reported, as well as independence, to safeguard the Dialogue from partisan capture, affirming its legitimacy as a space owned by the people, not by political elites.
- The Lekgotla has noted the critical importance of community participation, and that this can be achieved

through proper coordination, targeting all community structures and formations, in each province.

- As such the Lekgotla noted that the Province should convene dialogues, mobilise stakeholders, consolidate provincial inputs, identify facilitators and rapporteurs, strengthen participation and coordination at provincial level.
- The Lekgotla resolved to support the National Dialogue for the realisation of its objectives, through the following measures:
  - Appoint coordination teams
  - Support district & ward dialogues
  - Ensure inclusive participation.

### **5.3 The Provincial Budget and Expenditure Outcomes**

- The Lekgotla analysed the financial position of the Provincial Government over the past nine months, to determine if the expenditure is in line with the priorities and the MTDP targets.
- It was noted that the overall expenditure since the adjustment budget was tabled last year, is 74.2%, and that both Departments of Health and Education, have been allocated a lion's share compared to other departments.
- The Lekgotla further noted the recorded expenditure of 64% on infrastructure projects, as was marked as slow expenditure.

- In the advent of the digital era, the Provincial Government is at an advanced stage towards the improvement of Information Technology systems.
- An amount of R224m demonstrates the critical need of upgrading computer services, financial systems, cybersecurity, and ICT infrastructure, which are essential for governance.
- The Lekgotla noted that the Province is generally on track, but infrastructure and grant-specific bottlenecks must be cleared in the last quarter to mitigate year-end underspending risks.
- It was resolved that all efforts must be made to ensure that no department surrender allocated funds by the end of the financial year, especially as a province is still recovering from the recent disasters which impacted the infrastructure detrimentally.

#### **5.4 The State of Local Government**

- The number of households with access to water has increased from 1,235,476 to 1,349,250, representing an increase of 1% compared to the 2022 census.
- Access to sanitation increased by 3%, rising from 1,363,430 households in 2022 to 1,520,412. Additionally, the number of households with flush toilets improved from 814,220 to 1,026,972.

- Access to electricity increased from 1,332,152 households (94%) in 2022 to 1,378,548 households (89%) in 2024, providing an additional 46,396 households with electricity.
- Notwithstanding persistent challenges for the delivery of services such as water, Municipalities are showing a steady progress in the delivery of water and electricity.
- Most prevalent challenges can be summed up as old and aging infrastructure, vandalism of infrastructure, illegal connections, poor payments and technical capacity gaps.
- The high Eskom debts are leaving a detrimental effect in the financial stability of municipalities.
- Municipalities must enforce by laws to curb illegal connections and improve security of infrastructure.
- In its wisdom, the Lekgotla has directed Municipalities to develop and implement credible repayment plans with Eskom and the appointment of qualified artisans and process controllers.

## **5.5 Progress Report on Response to Provincial Disasters.**

- The Mpumalanga province has experienced floods disaster in December 2025 and January 2026, leading to 20 fatalities and extensive damages to infrastructure across municipalities.
- All affected sector departments and municipalities have completed assessments for funding to the National

Disaster Management Centre through the Provincial Disaster Management Centre.

- To date, **R49 million** has been allocated to the province for the disasters to rehabilitate infrastructure.
- Municipalities have started with disaster recovery interventions in relation to roads, water and electricity.
- The Nkomazi municipality in particular, has commenced with the restoration of water supply across villages within the jurisdiction of the municipality.
- The following challenges were identified, some of which include, but not limited to the inadequate funding to implement infrastructure rehabilitation plans, and that most of the damaged infrastructure, in particular bridges or culverts, were not designed to be resilient to floods.

6. **Day 2** of the Iekgotla focused on the following critical matters:

- GBVF Implementation Plan, State of the Province Address (SOPA) priorities, analysed progress on the implementation of Infrastructure projects.
- The Iekgotla acknowledged recorded progress in province's infrastructure development.
- The province has invested massively in infrastructure development, such as roads, social amenities, such as health facilities, libraries, community halls, human settlements, over the years.

- This has been intensified through the Kubhunya Luthuli programme, during the establishment of the 7<sup>th</sup> Administration.
- Further details on these accomplishments and service delivery interventions will be outlined by the Premier, when he delivers the much anticipated State of the Province Address (SOPA) on Thursday, next week.