



co-operative governance
& traditional affairs

MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Policy and Budget Speech 2024/25



“Together We Move Mpumalanga Forward”



Vision

Responsive, effective, efficient and sustainable co-operative governance system.

Mission

To ensure that Municipalities and Traditional Institutions in the Province perform their basic responsibilities and functions by promoting good governance, sound financial management and administrative capability.

POLICY AND BUDGET SPEECH 2024/25

**SPEECH BY THE MEC FOR COGHSTA, HON. SPEED KATISHI
MASHILO, ON THE TABLING OF THE POLICY AND BUDGET
SPEECH IN THE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE**

DATE: 07 AUGUST 2024



**HONOURABLE SPEAKER MS. LL MASINA;
HONOURABLE DEPUTY - SPEAKER, MR. S MASANGO
HON. PREMIER, MR MANDLA NDLOVU
COLLEAGUES IN THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL;
HON. MEMBERS OF THE MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE;
CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON COGTA AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS,
HON. DP NKOSI;
CHIEF WHIP OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, HONOURABLE MS E MAKHABANE
CHAIRPERSON OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (SALGA) IN
MPUMALANGA, CLLR.W MNGOMEZULU;
THE PROVINCIAL SECRETARY OF THE GOVERNING PARTY, CDE MUZI CHIRWA
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;
ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT MR TP
NYONI;
MANAGEMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COGTA, LED BY THE HEAD, MR S NGUBANE
COMPATRIOTS AND FELLOW CITIZENS.
SANIBONANI, DUMELANG, LOTJHANI**

INTRODUCTION

Madam Speaker,

1. It is an honour to present the Policy and Budget Speech Vote 4, for the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) as we embark on, the 7th administration. As the MEC for COGHSTA I am committed to ensuring that the Department remains a beacon of excellence in governance, transparency and accountability, serving the Communities of our Province with distinction.
2. We cannot relate to local government without conducting a comparison with the previous apartheid regime which excluded Black majority and the present democratic government and which is exclusive of all our people irrespective of race,

STRUGGLE FOR RESISTANCE AGAINST OPPRESSION & APARTHEID

3. We come from a painful era that started with the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910, it was followed in 1948 by the introduction of apartheid policy by the then Prime Minister Verwoed. Apartheid Laws were enacted especially the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959. That in itself, opened the floodgates of inequality, poverty and sufferings for the majority of black people.
4. All these sufferings resulted in the organised resistance from the oppressed blacks. It is where many anti-apartheid protests were organised, including the 1955 Kliptown gathering where the Freedom Charter was founded. Followed by the anti-pass laws of 1956 led by our gallant and fearless women of Mama Albertina Sisulu, Lillian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Sophia de Bruyn and Rahima Moosa. We should'nt forget that pass laws were meant to control and limit the movement of black people and not genuinely recognising them as people of the Republic of South Africa.
5. It was a question of submission or fight; our leaders of Madiba, Sisulu, Oom Goven Mbeki, Ahmed Kathrada, Raymond Mhlaba, Denis Golberg, Andrew Mlangeni and others, were conducting clandestine activities against the regime at the Revonia Farm. They were ultimately discovered and sentenced to life imprisonment at Robben Island.

Honourable Speaker

The struggle for resistance became part of daily lives. When the apartheid regime through Dr Piet Koornhof introduced the Separate Development Act, which intensified two sets of municipalities, one for whites, Indians, coloureds and blacks; the first three races were accommodated in the tri-cameral parliament and blacks were excluded.

Koornhof introduced an apartheid local government system characterised by separate development, unfortunately, some of our people fell into that trap and participated in that 'Left Overs' municipal system. It was one system that our people totally rejected;

STRUGGLE FOR RESISTANCE AGAINST APARTHEID LOCAL GOVERNMENT FROM 1980s

The intensity of rejecting the apartheid local government reached high levels of resistance. Ultimately, Cde Moses Mayekiso, Ali Maziya and others led the early SANCO which was at the forefront of resisting apartheid local government. Action Committees were established in many parts of our Black townships. The strategy was to make the system unworkable.

RENT BOYCOTT

The approach was to boycott payment of municipal services. It was influenced by the anger of under-development where quality service delivery was only visible in white only areas, blacks were totally given left over from the apartheid master table. In the black townships, there was no sufficient civil infrastructure development projects like sewer networks, instead our people were given bucket systems, yet whites enjoyed decent and healthy sewerage system.

Honourable Speaker

Recently, I received a letter from the Honourable Member, Mr Masango, enquiring about the sanitation for people of Goven Mbeki Local Municipality. I am humbled to respond to you Honourable Member that the people you have mentioned in your letter, are cruel victims of the apartheid legacy. I so wish that your colleagues in the DA party you now belong to, have shared with you how blacks were excluded from the mainstream of quality services, then you will understand, furthermore, we have worked hard as this democratic government to ensure that the bucket system is eradicated, we are aware that there is a lot to do to completely remedy the situation.

The former President Thabo Mbeki once said that South Africa is a country of two worlds, the one which is far developed, and the other one being grossly underdeveloped, yet they both exist in one country.

Furthermore Mbeki said “We know this is as a matter of fact that the struggle to eradicate poverty and underdevelopment in our own country is fundamental to the achievement of our own national goals to build a caring and a people cantered society”

What the former President Mbeki alluded to, was the impact of separate development that engulfed our country and the commitment to build better communities; that is the agenda of this provincial government. The 7th administration is calling upon all members of the opposition to attend a proposed Service Delivery Indaba. The purpose thereof is to find common ground on how best we can transform our society for the better.

DEMOCRATIZATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT FROM 1994

The ushering of the new democratic dispensation in 1994, democratised local government through the establishment of Transitional Local Government of 1995. This arrangement brought together all previously and racially divided municipalities into one. This was followed by the first democratic local government elections, which introduced a people-centred and democratic municipalities. After the elections, regulations governing municipalities were introduced, such as Municipal Structures Act and Systems Acts. These two legislations brought in accountability, transparency and control of municipalities.

6. Proper governing is underpinned by Regulations, Rules, Accountability, Transparency and Ethics. As the 2nd tier of government, our mandate is to support and regulate the 3rd tier of government which is local government and that is referred to as Cooperative Government. It is at this level that our people walk the 1st step to democracy and be involved in all matters of local government, that is called public participation.
7. I find inspiration in the timeless words of Nelson Mandela: ***“It always seems impossible until it is done.”*** These powerful words resonate deeply as we stand at the threshold of transformation, ready to face the challenges that lie ahead. With unwavering determination and a spirit of unity, we will navigate the complexities of our path together. We will actively listen to the aspirations and dreams of our people, harnessing their voices to guide our decisions. Each voice matters in this collective endeavour, and together, we will craft a vision that reflects our shared hopes and values.
8. Our commitment to bold action will propel us towards a brighter future, one filled with opportunity, equity and progress. Together, we will turn the seemingly impossible into reality, creating a legacy of empowerment and inspiration for generations to come.
9. The Department, together with the Mpumalanga House of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders (MPHTKL), continues to mourn the loss of Inkhosi RA Nkosi of the Enikwakuyengwa Traditional Council and Ikosi FJ Mabena of the Manala Makerana Traditional Council. We offer our deepest condolences to the Royal Families and the entire community. ***May Their Souls Rest in peace***
10. Our primary focus in this administration will be on building a solid foundation for effective local governance, empowering traditional leadership structures, and enhancing service delivery to all communities. We recognize the vital role that local government plays in driving development and improving the quality of life for our citizens.
11. Therefore, we are committed in supporting municipalities to fulfil their mandate and ensuring that our people are at the forefront of every decision-making process. We will also work closely with Traditional Leaders to ensure that their voices are heard and their contributions are valued within our governance structures.

Honourable Members,

12. In the recent address delivered by the His Excellency President, Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa, he eloquently underscored the urgent need for collaborative efforts to address the pervasive scourge of crime and violence in our society, noting that our collective future is dependent on how we confront these challenges.
13. We cannot afford to remain silent in the face of the rising tide of Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) that plagues our communities, nor can we overlook the pervasive lawlessness that threatens our safety and security. To do so would be serious injustice, not only to the victims who suffer in silence but also to the very fabric of our society.
14. The President has called for a united response, emphasizing that it is our moral obligation to raise our voices and take decisive action against the perpetrators of these abhorrent acts. We must champion the rights of the vulnerable and ensure that every individual can live free from fear, violence, and oppression.

15. As we strive to Leave No One Behind and Grow Mpumalanga Together, we will harness the power of collective action to propel us forward. Our commitment to transparency, accountability, and good governance will be unwavering. We will work tirelessly to ensure that our citizens are at the centre of every decision-making process and that every individual has access to quality services and opportunities.
16. In this Address, I will reflect on the milestones we have achieved over the years, highlighting both the successes and challenges we have faced, and outlining our vision for a brighter future. I am confident that together, we can build a brighter future for our province, where every citizen has access to quality services, opportunities, and a sense of belonging.

NATIONAL GENERAL ELECTIONS

Again, Madam Speaker

17. It is with gratitude that I extend my appreciation to the people of Mpumalanga for their remarkable enthusiasm and participation in the recent National General Elections. The people of Mpumalanga have once again demonstrated their tenacious commitment to the principles of democracy by exercising their revered right to vote and shape the future of our province.
18. We are proud of the role the Department has played in facilitating this democratic process by ensuring the provision of essential basic services at all polling stations and remain grateful for the support from our partners and sector Departments that made this possible.
19. As we embark on this new chapter, we are reminded of the enormous responsibility that rests on our shoulders as leaders. We are committed to working tirelessly to ensure that the needs and aspirations of our citizens are met and that our Province continues to thrive and prosper.

CONTEXT

BUILDING A CAPABLE, ETHICAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL STATE

Madam Speaker,

20. The Hon. Premier in his Opening of the Legislature Address emphasized the importance of building a capable, ethical and developmental state and raised concerns regarding poor performance which must be addressed.
21. As part of our contribution of building a robust developmental state, in line with the announcement by the Honourable Premier, we shall forge ahead in restructuring the two Departments of COGTA and Human Settlements as COGHSTA which must attract effective and efficient expertise, coherent planning, responsive spatial actions towards properly settling our communities and society in an integrated manner.
22. In the words of the late President OR Tambo of the ANC: ***“It Was Always My Desire To strike New Ground and Help to Lend Weight Where It Was Most Required”***

23. This bold statement confirms that new weight of strategies and innovations were needed to restructure COGHSTA, which shall be effective in ensuring corruption-free municipal administrations, promotion of good governance, addressing unplanned settlement patterns that did not promote equitable distribution of basic services and closing the coordination gap between Government and society.
24. It is our constitutional obligation that we go that direction, and in that way, no more shall we have houses with households without the necessary basic services and amenities.
25. As we all acknowledge the fundamental role that our municipalities play in the development and well-being of our citizens, it is also imperative to recognize the challenges they have faced in recent years. Unfortunately, some of our municipalities have been plagued by financial mismanagement, ageing infrastructure and maladministration, which have hindered their ability to provide the essential services that our communities rely on.
26. However, despite these challenges, I am proud to say that strides have been made to address these issues and improve the quality of life for our communities. Through innovative initiatives, strategic partnerships, and a commitment to good governance, our municipalities have been able to overcome many of the obstacles they faced and deliver improved services to our citizens.
27. From investing in infrastructure enhancements to implementing efficient waste management systems, our municipalities have demonstrated their ability to adapt and respond to the changing needs of our communities. Additionally, efforts have been made to promote transparency and accountability, ensuring that our citizens are informed and engaged in the decision-making process.
28. I believe it is essential for us to continue supporting and empowering our municipalities to overcome the challenges they face and to build stronger, more resilient communities. By working together, we can ensure that our municipalities are equipped to provide the high-quality services that our citizens deserve and that our communities continue to thrive.
29. Building the capacity of the state continues to be a top priority for our Department. In line with our commitment, we have recruited suitable qualified Senior Managers and in line with the employment equity targets, where female representation at SMS level, is currently at 45.8%. In compliance with the professionalisation framework of Public Service, the Department takes great pride in the fact that at SMS level we have, most Officials at NQF Levels 9 and 10 Graduates. The Department is proud to have inspired all Officials to take academic advancements seriously in the likes of Mr. Jabulani Mavundla, a Community Development Worker (CDW), who has recently achieved his Master of Philosophy in Management Science, specializing in Public Management. This is one example of pushing ahead with the meritocracy of advancing our Teams. **Can I request, with your permission Madam Speaker, Mr Mavundla to stand up so he can be acknowledged.**
30. Equally, we are pleased to inform the House that strides have been made in Municipalities to appoint suitably qualified Senior Managers in line with the Amended Municipal Systems Act. Notably, 100 out of the 124 Senior Manager positions in Municipalities have been filled, with 24 outstanding vacancies. We are, in this regard, supporting municipalities with the development of the recruitment acceleration plans to fill these vacancies and assist them during the recruitment and selection processes.

31. In terms of gender representation, 40% of the filled posts are held by women, while 60% are held by men. Although Municipalities are making strides in prioritizing gender representation in their recruitment processes for senior management positions, much more still needs to be done.
32. All appointed Senior Managers in municipalities within the Province have complied with the Municipal Performance Regulations by signing performance agreements at the beginning of the financial year (31 July 2024) as required by legislation.
33. I would like to acknowledge the following municipalities that have successfully implemented the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) across all levels: Gert Sibande District Municipality, Nkangala District Municipality, Ehlanzeni District Municipality and Bushbuckridge Local Municipality. Additionally, Chief Albert Luthuli and Lekwa Local Municipalities have commenced the rollout of PMDS to all levels at the beginning of the current financial year, 2024/2025. I direct that all other municipalities to follow their lead in this important initiative.
34. Capacity development is also essential for Traditional Leaders to adapt to the evolving dynamics of society, address technological advancements, and navigate new governance frameworks. By investing in the ongoing development of the Traditional Leaders, we can help ensure their responsiveness and effectiveness in their roles. It is our commitment that working together with the Department of Education and other Training Institutions to improve the literacy levels of our Traditional Leaders.
35. In our endeavour to advocate for an ethical state, the Department has made it mandatory for all SMS Members to complete a comprehensive Ethics Management Course, in 2022 as well as other officials. Noting that only recently DPSA made the Course mandatory in the Public Service, in this regard we will work with our municipalities to incrementally introduce the Ethics Management Course to all Senior Management and Staff.
36. The above among others, have contributed to the outstanding track record of maintaining a clean audit status for the past decade. This achievement not only reflects our commitment to transparency and efficient resource management but also sets a benchmark for excellence in the public service. As we continue our efforts, we are working diligently to extend these principles and practices to our Municipalities. By sharing best practices and resources, we aim to empower Local Governments to achieve similar standards of governance and accountability, ultimately contributing to a stronger and more effective state framework.
37. The Code for Ethical Leadership in Local Government was launched by the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs on March 1, 2024. The Code aims to institutionalize ethical leadership, fostering collaboration among key stakeholders such as the Ethics Institute (TEI), the National Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), and the Moral Regeneration Movement (MRM). In this regard, we are committed to taking the lead in implementing training programs and awareness sessions that will make the Code for Ethical Leadership in Local Government an active and integral part of our municipalities.
38. We remain committed in fighting corruption whenever it rises its ugly head. We are pleased with the progress made by municipalities in implementing the recommendations of the Section 106 investigations conducted. Of the five municipalities, Dr JS Moroka, Dipaleseng, Dr Pixley ka Isaka Seme, Govan Mbeki and Nkomazi, the progress on implementation is at the final stages wherein cases are in court and some with the law enforcement agencies.

39. We have also recently concluded investigations in Mkhondo and Bushbuckridge municipalities and these reports will be tabled before the respective Councils. The Department shall take responsibility to compile implementation plans for each of these reports for actioning. No longer shall we experience delays in the implementation of the recommendations, in future it must be mandatory that municipalities must have implemented the recommendations within a period of 90 days of the tabling of the report in Council.
40. Similarly, the Department has successfully secured discretionary grant funding from the Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority (LGSETA) to support a range of training initiatives designed to strengthen the capabilities of local government.
41. Since the introduction of the Local Government Municipal Staff Regulation, 2021, we have successfully collaborated with various Municipalities in conducting Skills Audit. To date, we have supported the City of Mbombela, Lekwa and Emakhazeni Municipalities in conducting Skills Audits in compliance with the Regulation. This financial year, we are pleased to announce that we will extend our support to three additional Municipalities: Victor Khanye, Thaba Chweu, and Steve Tshwete Local Municipalities.
42. These Skills Audits are crucial for accurately evaluating existing capacity and identifying gaps. Again, these will show us if the people employed in our municipalities have the correct qualifications and meet the minimum requirements. Where the current incumbents fall short of the minimum requirements, we expect the municipalities to implement the remedial actions in addressing the identified short comings. No Officials in terms of the Municipal Staff Regulations, should occupy senior posts without the relevant qualifications.

MUNICIPAL FINANCE

Honourable Speaker,

43. Section 131(2) of the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (MFMA) stipulates that the MEC must access annual financial statements of Municipalities, audit reports on such statements and responses and determine whether Municipalities have adequately addressed any issues raised by AG in the audit reports. Therefore, effective financial management is fundamental to the sustainability of our Municipalities.
44. I am pleased to report that, following the Executive Council's decision to re-establish the Municipal Finance Directorate. The Directorate is now officially established and we are fully committed to enhancing our support for municipalities in this regard.
45. This Directorate will collaborate closely with Provincial Treasury and SALGA to elevate the financial performance of our municipalities. Our key focus areas include:
- Improving audit outcomes for our municipalities where for the 2022/2023 financial year, 2 received Clean Audits, 7 Unqualified with findings, 10 Qualified with findings, 1 with Adverse Audit Outcome and no municipality had received a Disclaimed Audit Outcome
 - Reducing Unauthorised, Irregular, Fruitless, and Wasteful (UIFW) expenditure from R16.9 billion (2021/2022 financial year) to R14.6 billion (2022/2023 financial year). We would be hard at work with our municipalities to ensure that we further reduce these instances of UIFW to even lower levels, or where possible, totally eliminated

- Enhancing the functionality of Municipal Public Accounts Committees (MPACs) to empower them to conduct UIFW investigations, whose findings must be handed over to the Disciplinary Boards.
- Ensuring that municipalities pass the funded budgets in order to stabilise their finances and enhance their revenue tax bases.

The financial situations of some Municipalities remain a concern. Their liquidity ratio indicates that they do not have sufficient funds to pay their creditors, salaries as well as third party obligations amongst other to quote but a few for the next three months. We will be conducting institutional capability and financial viability assessments in terms of Section 105 of the Municipal Systems Act, on all municipalities which will inform the development of revenue enhancements strategies to improve their financial situations.

RT29 SMART METERING INTEVENTION

The National Treasury has awarded the RT29 – 2024 contracts that seeks to modernised municipal infrastructure, enhance operation efficiency and ensure sustainable resource management by adopting smart metering solutions. In the Province 10 Municipalities have been identified to participate in the contract at no cost to the municipalities. The beneficiary municipalities include Msukaligwa, Mkhondo, Lekwa, Dipaleseng, Govan Mbeki, Victor Khanye, eMalahleni, Emakhazeni, Thaba Chweu and the City of Mbombela. The benefits of these contracts will help deal with, billing accuracy, revenue enhancement and proper customer service, key amongst others. The Department will monitor the implementation in utilising local content for the smart meter installation.

MUNICIPAL PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORTING AND EVALUATION

MUNICIPAL MONITORING AND SUPPORT SYSTEM (MMSS)

Madam Speaker,

46. In terms of section 105 of the Local Government Municipal Systems Act, 2000 read with section 155(6) of the Constitution of the Republic, 1996, the MEC must monitor whether municipalities are able to manage their own affairs, monitor their capacity and asses the support that is needed by municipalities to strengthen their capacity to exercise their functions.
47. To this end, a Notice No. 110 of 2022 was published in the Provincial Gazette, in terms of section 105(2) of the Local Government Municipal Systems Act, wherein, municipalities were directed to submit information that will enable the Department to assess among others, the support to be provided. This was further enhanced with the development of an electronic system which shall enable the Department to do, amongst others, the following:
 - access vital information necessary for identifying areas where municipalities require support and
 - monitor and analyse performance of municipalities.
 - upload and analyse documents.
 - provide real-time analysis of the situation in our municipalities and
 - implement an Electronic Complaint Management System for streamlined issues resolution.

ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Madam Speaker,

48. The provision of basic services, such as clean water, sanitation, electricity and refuse removal, is not just a constitutional responsibility but it represents the cornerstone of sustainable development and is key to unleashing the full potential of our communities. Access to these essential services elevates quality of life and fuels economic growth, while their absence perpetuates poverty and exacerbates inequalities.
49. The implementation of the District Development Model (DDM) has been instrumental in advancing catalytic projects across various sectors, including infrastructure development, education, healthcare, and economic growth. These initiatives are designed to address urgent community challenges, significantly improving the quality of life across the three districts. Among our notable achievements to date the following projects have been completed:
- Zinekeleni Technical High School Sasol initiative,
 - the upgrading of the Eerstehoek Water Scheme (Phases 1 and 2) and
 - the Karino Road Interchange.
50. Additionally, the Public-Private Growth Initiative (PPGI) Operational Framework has made significant headway in its pilot impact zone in the Ehlanzeni District, successfully attracting 47 private sector investors and identifying 60 potential investment projects. We have also formalized partnerships through Memorandum of Agreement (MOAs) between Nkangala District, Ehlanzeni District Municipalities and Public-Private Growth Initiative (PPGI) setting the stage for mutually beneficial private-sector collaborations.
51. These projects and initiatives we are rolling out reflect our firm commitment to enhancing access to essential services, improving community well-being and fostering sustainable development throughout the Province. We remain dedicated to collaborating with a wide array of stakeholders to ensure these services are delivered effectively and equitably.
52. On May 10, 2024, the Minister for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) officially enacted Regulations for the District Development Model (DDM). This initiative aims to create a robust framework for the institutional implementation and execution of the DDM across the nation.
53. We are, therefore, happy to announce that on August 29, 2024, our Province will partner with National COGTA and the Office of the Premier to host the Provincial DDM Roadshow. The roadshow is a crucial component of the Department's broader mandate to oversee the effective rollout of the DDM.
54. To address the long-standing deterioration of municipal infrastructure, our municipalities have made significant progress in the 2023/24 financial year through the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG), Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant (RBIG) and Water Services Infrastructure Grant (WSIG). The development of water and sanitation infrastructure is a priority of the Province and our Municipalities. This is consistent with the utterance of the Honourable Premier that this priority area shall occupy our efforts through municipalities in the next 18 months.

55. We have been implementing several water and sanitation infrastructure projects in collaboration with the Department of Water and Sanitation with the aim of, not only, increasing households' access to water and sanitation but also to improve the Blue, Green and no drop performance. Some of these projects have been recently completed and includes the following projects:

IN GERT SIBANDE DISTRICT:

- Phase 1&2 of the replacement of asbestos cement gravity main pipe for water supply in Kinross and Equipment of Embalenhle sewer pump stations in extension 22 and 25, within Govan Mbeki Local Municipality.
- Construction of Driefontein sanitation infrastructure and Installation of flush toilets in rural areas of Mkhondo Local Municipality.
- Phase 1&2 of the installation of sewer reticulation in Wesselton extension 11 and at Breyten extension 2, and Electro-Mechanical upgrades to extension 32, 33 and 34 pumpstations in Ermelo, in Msukaligwa Local Municipality
- The refurbishment of Vukuzakhe Wastewater Treatment Works in Ward 3, and the refurbishment of sewer pump station and Wastewater Treatment Works in Dr Pixley ka Isaka Seme Local Municipality.

IN NKANGALA DISTRICT

- The replacement of asbestos bulk pipe line from Ga-Phahla to Siyabuswa A and from the Water Treatment Plant to Bloedfontein reservoir, in Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality.
- Upgrading of Tweefontein C, DK and Mabhoko Water Infrastructure and phase 2 of the construction of Entokozweni Water Infrastructure, in Thembisile Hani Local Municipality.
- Phase 2 of the construction of Entokozweni Water Infrastructure in Emalahleni Local Municipality.

IN EHLANZENI DISTRICT

- Extension of water reticulation and upgrade of plant in Louieville and phase 5 of the construction of toilets in various old villages in Nkomazi Local Municipality.
- The installation of water reticulation in Coromandel and Mashishing extension 7 Sewer Reticulation in Thaba Chweu Local Municipality

56. As was highlighted by the Honourable Premier in his Address, the following are some of the water and sanitation infrastructure projects for implementation in line with his directive:

- Provision of Water Reticulation at Emshinini Township extension 8, in Thaba Chweu Local Municipality
- Upgrading of Delmas Wastewater Treatment Works from 4Mega Litre per day to 124Mega Litre per day, including construction of Pre-Treatment System, in Victor Khanye Local Municipality
- Construction of 10Mega Litres Water Treatment Works, Bulk Pipeline, Pump Stations, and Reservoirs. The project intends to abstract water from Rust De Winter Dam to supply areas of Moretele in Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality
- Replacement of Asbestos Pipes in Thembisile Hani municipality
- The Refurbishment of Lothair Water Treatment Works, in Msukaligwa Local Municipality.
- Bulk Water to supply Balfour, Siyathuthuka, Greylingstad and Grootvlei, in Dipaliseng Local Municipality

57. In improving access to refuse removal, the Province has supported municipalities with the implementation of solid waste management projects including the procurement of solid waste fleet which includes, Tipper Trucks, Compactor Trucks, Excavators and a Dozer. These fleet are now being utilised by Municipalities such as Nkomazi, Dipaleseng, Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme, Thembisile Hani and Mkhondo to enhance access to refuse removal. In the current financial year, municipalities such as Thembisile Hani, Emakhazeni, Steve Tshwete, Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme and Govan Mbeki will be procuring 11 solid waste management fleet.
58. I would like to applaud all our municipalities for spending 100 percent on the R2 billion MIG allocation, without leaving a cent returned to the National Fiscus, leading in the country as an exemplar for emulation. We will continue working closely with MISA to ensure acceleration for bulk infrastructure to all corners of the Province.

ACTIONS SUPPORTIVE OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

59. In line with my Policy and Budget Speech for Human Settlements we have mentioned that mega projects such as Rondebosch Proper, Kwa-Zamokuhle extension 9, Ermelo extension 45, Grootvlei extension 5, Secunda extension 76; Leslie extension 8; Silobela extension 5, Amsterdam extension 5; KwaMhlushwa A extension 3, Komatipoort extension 18; Mashish-ing extension 8, 9 and 10, Thubelihle extension 7, Msholoji and Vukuzakhe B. are under implementation. We will work with the affected municipalities to ensure that bulk infrastructure for basic services is available. Similarly, as mentioned in the Human Settlements Policy and Budget Speech, the implementation of catalytic projects and smart cities will champion spatial transformation in communities where Nkosi City, Acorn City, SEZ Smart City and Verena Smart City amongst others are located.
60. In addressing land invasion, we encourage municipalities to follow suit as Thembisile Hani Local municipality which secured an eviction court order against people who bought municipal land which was illegally sold to them. The Department is committed to actively monitor and support municipalities in addressing land invasion.

UNEMPLOYMENT, JOB CREATION AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Madam Speaker,

61. According to the 2024 Provincial SERO Report, the provincial strict unemployment rate is 36,2 % and the poverty rate in the Province is 50.2%. Six municipalities are classified as the most poverty-stricken municipalities such as
- Mkhondo at 63.8%,
 - Nkomazi at 63.1%,
 - Bushbuckridge at 62.1%,
 - Thembisile Hani at 58.3%,
 - Dr JS Moroka at 57.1%, and
 - Chief Albert Luthuli at 55%.

In responding to job creation and poverty alleviation the Department is implementing:

- the Community Works Programme (CWP) which has successfully generated and maintained 26 625 job opportunities to date. It is worth mentioning that the CWP work opportunity distribution in Bushbuckridge, Nkomazi, and Chief Albert Luthuli is amongst the highest within the programme given the relative high levels of poverty in these municipalities.
- the EPWP Youth Waste Management programme creating 190 job opportunities to 6 municipalities which include the top 5 most poverty-stricken municipalities and Dipaleseng Local Municipality.
- the MIG linked EPWP through municipalities targeting to create 7 052 job opportunities in the 2024/2025 financial year.

62. In addition, I am delighted to inform the House that the majority of our contractors for the construction of traditional council offices were sourced from local businesses, resulting in the creation of more than 200 job opportunities within our traditional communities across the Province. This achievement is more than just a number; it is a testament to our dedication to fostering sustainable economic development and enhancing the livelihoods of our residents. We will continue in this financial year to work with traditional communities in creating job opportunities whilst fighting poverty.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

63. The Disaster Management Act, 2002, requires that we always address disaster institutional arrangement, disaster risk assessment, disaster risk reduction and disaster response and recovery. I would like to assure this House that all our Disaster Management Centres are fully functional. In addition, we have sourced the service of the Inkomati-Usuthu Catchment Management Agency (IUCMA) for the development of the Provincial Flood Management Strategy which shall assist the province to proactively responds to flood disasters. In the 2023/2024 financial year, the Provincial Disaster Management Centre has coordinated affected municipalities in terms of infrastructure damages arising from floods and supported them to receive a total of R323 million from the National Disaster Management Centre to implement infrastructure rehabilitation programme. The Department will continue to support municipalities in this regard.

64. The 6th Administration has promised to deliver five state-of-the-art Double Cab Rapid Response firefighting vehicles to five municipalities. These vehicles were accordingly acquired and delivered to the following beneficiary municipalities such as Lekwa, Nkomazi, Chief Albert Luthuli, Dipaleseng and Thaba Chweu. We shall continue to coordinate proper fire brigade services.

65. The recent veld and forest fires in the Province have affected approximately over 300 000 hectares affecting largely, the Agricultural sector which includes, Live Stock, Crops, Farming, Cane fields, Forestry and Conservation: Game facilities across the three districts. The damage is estimated at Hundreds of millions of rands which are currently being assessed for the actual values.

66. It is in this regard, that we shall host the veld and forest fires Indaba to engage and outline areas of intervention including the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders such as Working on Fire, municipalities, Department of Fisheries, Forestry and the Environment, Farmers and Amakhosi, to name but a few.

TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS

RECONSTITUTION OF TRADITIONAL COUNCILS

Honourable Members.

67. We have made substantial advancements in creating a conducive environment and laid the foundation for the Reconstitution of Traditional Councils. Furthermore, I am delighted to announce the appointment of two critical Committees, namely, Investigative Committee tasked with addressing disputes and claims related to traditional leadership and the Ad-Hoc Committee which deals with determination and resolution of disputes regarding the areas of jurisdiction of Traditional Councils, in accordance with the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act, 2019. **Can I request, with your permission Madam Speaker, Chairpersons of these Committees, to stand up so they can be acknowledged.**

SAFETY AND WELFARE OF AMAKHOSI

68. We have noted the concerns raised by the Honourable Premier in his Opening of the Legislature Address related to the scourge of the Traditional Leaders murder cases reported. The Department will continue to engage with all stakeholders to find lasting solutions to address these killings. As tasked by the Honourable Premier, working together with the MEC of Community Safety Security and Liaison, we shall establish a Task Team as assigned, that will deal with the killings of Traditional Leaders as well as implement tight security measures for our Traditional Leaders in the Province.

TOOLS OF TRADE FOR TRADITIONAL LEADERS

69. Last year, we committed to construct and renovate Traditional Council offices throughout the Province. I am pleased to inform the house that, to date, the construction of 22 (twenty-two) offices have been completed, fenced and supplied with new office furniture and the renovation of 18 (eighteen) offices have also been completed. These state-of-the-art Traditional Council offices are equipped with modern amenities such as conference rooms, kitchens and comfortable waiting areas for visitors to ensure efficient service delivery. In this current financial year, we will continue to construct and renovate Traditional Council offices across the Province.
70. Again, we have delivered vehicles to Traditional Councils with the exception of four Traditional Councils and they will be delivered soon. These vehicles will enable our Traditional Leaders to fulfil their legislative mandates in partnership with our government.

INGOMA PRACTICE

THE PROVINCIAL INITIATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE (PICC)

Madam Speaker,

71. The establishment of the Provincial Initiation Coordination Committee (PICC) and the Provincial Ingoma Task Team have been instrumental in tackling the issue of illegal initiation schools and advocating for safe initiation practices. We note the challenges that have been raised by the communities that seeks to undermine the issuing of permits without following proper pro-

cesses and the forceful abduction of young boys. We are working with the law enforcement agencies to address all these wrongdoings. The perpetrators of these heinous crimes will be brought to book. The PICC and Ingoma Task Team shall help us to improve that there are no fatalities in future by addressing the identified gaps of the past.

CONCLUSION

72. We are committed to revitalize our municipalities to enhance essential service delivery through improved governance and strategic budget allocations. Our focus will be on enhancing the skills, people empowerment through capacity development programmes, strengthening oversight and accountability through coordination and collaboration with Traditional Leaders. Last but not least, effective, efficient, responsive integrated human settlements and bulk infrastructure provision for basic services for all our communities.

73. It is a privilege to table the Department's budget, and I humbly request that the House approves the amount of **R 787 139 000 (Seven hundred and Eighty-Seven Million One Hundred and Thirty-Nine Thousand Rands)** for the 2024/25 financial year, as follows:

PROGRAMME 1: ADMINISTRATION- R 140 788 000 (One Hundred and Forty Million, Seven Hundred and Eighty-Eight Thousand Rands).

PROGRAMME 2: LOCAL GOVERNANCE- R 327 446 000 (Three Hundred and Twenty-Seven Million, Four Hundred and Forty-Six Thousand Rands).

PROGRAMME 3: DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING- R 50 077 000 (Fifty Million, and Seventy-Seven Thousand Rands).

PROGRAMME 4: TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONAL MANAGEMENT- R 246 093 000 (Two Hundred and Forty-Six Million, and Nighty-Three Thousand Rands).

PROGRAMME 5: HOUSE OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS- R 22 735 000 (Twenty-Two Million, Seven Hundred and Thirty-Five Thousand Rands).

74. Madam Speaker, as I conclude, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Management of the Department led by the Head, Mr Samukelo Ngubane for their unwavering support throughout my tenure in service to the people of Mpumalanga. My sincere appreciation also goes to the Honourable Premier, Mr. Mandla Ndlovu, and the African National Congress (ANC) for the trust they have bestowed upon me to lead this vital Department.

75. In the famous words of Mama Charlotte Maxeke: ***"This Work Is Not For Yourselfs, Kill That Spirit of Self and Do Not Live Above Your People, but Live With Them, and if you can rise, Bring Someone With You"***

76. Through these words, I invite all opposition parties represented in this House and stakeholders to unite with the governing party in addressing the challenges confronting our municipalities and Traditional Leaders. Together with SALGA, MISA, DWS and other sector departments at National Level we can develop impactful solutions that will enhance the well-being of our communities.

Let us join hands and Grow Mpumalanga Together. SIYATHOKOZA !!!

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HEAD OFFICE

Samora Machel Building
Riverside Government Complex
Mbombela 1200

POSTAL ADDRESS

Private Bag X 11304
Mbombela 1200

CONTACT NUMBER

Tel: (013) 766 6087

Fax: (013) 754 4708

www.cogta.mpg.gov.za



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