



EXCO MEDIA STATEMENT

For Immediate Release

All Media Houses

Date: 6 December 2024

EXCO takes decisive decisions on matters of foodborne illnesses and disaster management

The Mpumalanga province plays a significant role in the country's energy sector. Several power stations that produce the country's electricity are located in the province. Mining operations that produce coal minerals for electricity are also in the province.

The Premier, Mr. Mandla Ndlovu convened two sittings of the Executive Council to discuss, a broad range of fundamental issues such as the G20, the scourge of foodborne illnesses and disaster management.

On Monday, the sitting took place at the Gert Sibande District Council Chamber, in Ermelo, and was addressed by Minister of Electricity and Energy, Dr Kgosientsho Ramokgopa.

On Wednesday, the sitting took place in Mbombela. On both sessions EXCO took decisive decisions, including the measures to strengthen the capacity of the administration to deliver services.

1. Hosting of G20 energy session

As South Africa prepares to host the G20 summit next year, Mpumalanga has been identified as one of the international arenas for global discussions. The G20 comprises 19 countries and two regional bodies, the African Union, and the European Union.

The G20 is regarded as one of the multilateral forums for international economic cooperation.

Dr Ramokgopa presented an impressive plan to the Executive Council that positions Mpumalanga to host significant energy discussions during this critical phase of the Just Energy Transition. He announced that ministers from G20 countries will gather from the 23rd to the 26th of September 2025, to discuss energy mix and lower carbon-emitting technologies as part of the Just Energy Transition. He emphasized that this event will give the province a significant historical opportunity to host these nations and influence their positions on future power supply by international standards and protocols.

EXCO welcomed the plan and expressed commitment to initiate logistical preparations.

2. Disaster Management

A comprehensive report detailing the damages caused by heavy rain, hail, and thunderstorms in various areas was presented on Wednesday. The report illustrates a significant trail of destruction across several local municipalities, with Bushbuckridge being the most affected

in the Ehlanzeni District. An estimated 2,779 houses, 51 schools, and 14 healthcare facilities were damaged, and there were four reported fatalities.

In the Gert Sibande District Municipality, specifically within the Mkhondo Local Municipality, approximately 400 houses, municipal buildings, schools, and essential infrastructure like electricity and water have been damaged. In contrast, the Nkangala District reported no significant damage.

The Provincial Government, in collaboration with both district and local municipalities, has provided affected households with food parcels, gel stoves, blankets, mattresses, and tarpaulins. Additionally, organizations such as Gift of the Givers and the SA Red Cross have contributed relief materials, including food supplies.

The Executive Council (EXCO) praised the quick response of disaster management teams that supported all affected areas. They implemented vital measures to ensure the continuity of public services, including schools and healthcare facilities, despite the adverse weather conditions.

Damages are estimated at more than R 620 million. EXCO resolved that a state of disaster, in line with the classification of a Provincial state of disaster in the province be declared. Furthermore, all rehabilitation work and post-disaster recovery be accelerated by all sector departments and municipalities.

3. Provincial Flood Management Strategy

The Provincial Government is intensifying measures to mitigate the impact of disasters. A provincial flood management strategy was presented. It provides evidence of how the province is prone to heavy storms and floods.

The strategy categorises the flood risks as heavy storms and floods, among others, and their devastating effects on human and animal lives, infrastructure, agriculture and tourism.

Mitigation measures include the timely dissemination of accurate information and the coordination of all emergencies to work together.

EXCO approved the flood management strategy for implementation.

4. Provincial Foodborne Illness

The sitting considered a report about recorded progress by the Provincial Government in response to the outbreak of foodborne illnesses in the province. The report takes into consideration the implementation of drastic measures to prevent the spread of the scourge, which include the registration of Tuck-shops and Spaza shops, as well as the verification and awareness roadshows.

Progress made during the verification process of shops is also contained in the report. Notably, shops with no operational licences and expired food, were closed down. Other related progress include the following:

- The adoption of the standard draft by-laws by twelve Municipalities, namely: City of Mbombela, Chief Albert Luthuli, Dr JS Moroka, Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme, Ehlanzeni

District, Mkhondo, Msukaligwa, Lekwa, Nkomazi, Victor Khanye, Bushbuckridge and Emakhazeni.

- The completed training programmes for clinicians on case management of foodborne illnesses and Community Development Workers on food safety.

EXCO approved the report.

5. Crime prevention strategy 2024-29

The Provincial Government is committed to making Mpumalanga a safe place, despite the increasing crime rates. According to crime statistics released by the South African Police Services, the province is not exempt from incidents of Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF), including rape and murder. Additionally, there are concerns about farm-related crimes, such as stock theft, as well as gang activity and bullying in schools.

EXCO firmly believes that crime can be eradicated through an integrated approach involving community structures.

A proposed crime prevention strategy focuses on an integrated response to effectively combat crime. This strategy aims to create a sustainable and well-resourced system for fighting crime. Its key objectives include enhancing the capacity for crime prevention and mobilizing essential financial and human resources to support these efforts.

Through the strategy, government is poised to achieve the following:

- Reduce domestic violence.
- Create awareness campaigns which promote behavior change and restore positive values.
- Provide assistance to victim empowerment centers.
- Reduce secondary trauma to survivors.

Mpumalanga is regarded as one of the leading tourist destinations in the country. As such the deployment of Tourism Safety Monitors to designated areas, is an integral part of the strategy.

A 12 point action plan will be implemented to ensure rural safety. The plan includes tracking of farm attacks through a spatial dashboard and conducting of trend analysis to identify the rural crime hotspots for appropriate deployment.

EXCO approved the strategy and urged all stakeholders to implement it.

6. Merger of COGTA and Human Settlement and Transfer of transversal HR development function.

The merger of two departments, namely Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) and Human Settlements into one entity has been proclaimed. The plan for the merger was announced by the Premier during the opening of the Provincial Legislature in July 2024, and sought to address the silo effect of building human settlements without bulk infrastructure. Since then a proclamation has been published in the National Gazette, in November 2024. It gives effect to the new name of the department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlement and Traditional Affairs (COGHSTA).



A progress report which include the establishment of structures to guide the process, was tabled. It outlines the consultation process of key stakeholders before the conclusion of the process.

Currently the new department is in Phase 1 of the implementation of the Start-up Structure, which entail the matching and placement of officials. More efforts are also channeled towards the creation of the approved Organisational Structure on the PERSAL system.

EXCO further considered a plan to transfer the Transversal Human Resource Development function from the department of Education to the Office of the Premier (OTP). The plan is based on the requirement set by the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) for the Offices of the Premier and sectoral departments to comply with the Generic Functional Structures.

The sitting noted that Mpumalanga is among the three provinces that are not compliant to the Generic Functional Structures, which locate the function within the OTP. The other two provinces are Gauteng and the Northern Cape.

The movement of the function, including officials and assets, will come into effect as from 1 April 2025.

EXCO endorsed the decision and directed that both organisational structures of the two institutions be revised in light of the new developments.

7. Mpumalanga learners to study in Cuba

The Provincial Government's skills development initiative received a major boost when EXCO approved a plan for ten learners from Mpumalanga to study medicine in Cuba. The learners were selected across the three Districts as part of the Nelson Mandela Fidel Castro programme, based on the bilateral agreement signed between South Africa and Cuba in 1996.

Since its inception, 266 medical students have graduated, primarily from historically disadvantaged and rural communities. Currently, 10 students from Mpumalanga are in their first year of studies in Cuba. Additionally, 14 students are completing their final year of clinical training at various South African medical schools after finishing part of their training in Cuba.

EXCO views the plan as a support pillar to the growing demand of medical services by communities in the province.

8. Appointments

EXCO approved the appointment of officials into strategic positions. These include Chief Directors in the Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation (DCSR). The appointments are in line with the priorities of the 7th administration, of building a capable, ethical and developmental state. They are:

- **Mr Mxolisi Mahlangu:** Chief Director for Cultural Affairs.
- **Ms Hazel Mayinga:** Chief Director for Library, Archive and Records Management.

Issued by the Mpumalanga Provincial Government

Office of the Premier

Contact Person: MEC Thulasizwe Thomo (Spokesperson - EXCO)

Enquiries: Mr. George Mthethwa (Spokesperson - Provincial Government)

Contact: 013 766 2242/ 083 302 2774.