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EDITORIAL COMMENT

The first quarter of the financial year 2012/13 has come to an end. It has been a hectic period where the department opened the House of Traditional Leaders, held the elections for House of Traditional Leaders and delivered the 2012/13 budget vote for the department. The department has begun the 2012/13 financial year in earnest.

As the fire season starts, it is the responsibility of every citizen to prevent a potential disaster that can be caused by an outbreak of fire. The department is working together with Disaster Management teams at municipal level and NGOs to put systems in place that will deal with any possible outbreak of veld fires.

Fires can cause human loss, live stock, property, forestry as it happened in our province five years ago. It is therefore the responsibility of every one to prevent it.

The rights to protest are enshrined in our constitution. However, they should be exercised with responsibility. It cannot be a right to protest if such action ends up with destruction of public property aimed at providing services to our people. Any protest should be undertaken within the ambit of the law. As communities we should disassociate ourselves against vandals who masquerade as champions of service delivery protests. Some of these protests have caused loss of lives as we have seen in some cases where councillors have been attacked.

We salute Community Development Workers (CDWs) for proactively informing us about potential cases of protests. They are truly the foot soldiers of government. They are government's early warning system. We salute members of the South African Police for bringing the perpetrators of violent protests to book. We salute the Premier, Mr D.D Mabuza, MEC Madala Masuku and HOD, Mr David Mahlobo for leaving the comfort of their offices and spending time on the ground, visiting service delivery points, such as water pumps, to unblock service delivery obstacles.

We welcome new employees into our fold. We will provide you with the necessary support and we hope that together, we can improve the lives of our communities. On the same vein we congratulate officials who have been promoted within the department.

Disclaimer

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MEC's FOREWORD

Municipalities are the heart beat of service delivery. It is understandable when people march to municipal offices to complain about lack of service delivery, as we have witnessed recently. Sometimes people march to the municipalities even on issues that are not the competency of the third sphere of government. They expect their municipality to do something about polluted water in their river and they expect the municipality to do something about employment opportunities in the private sector.

It baffles one's mind when people resort to violent acts in the process of expressing their grievances. Why burn graders in the process of marching for water service? What do the graders have to do with lack of water?

Government has limited resources that need to be spread throughout all communities. The responsibility to protect the resources, lies with us all.

Once again we call upon our communities to act with restraint when they exercise their rights to march.

The water challenges are unprecedented and Mpumalanga is not unique. Communities are growing and the infrastructure, especially pumping machines and water pipes transporting water from the rivers, is ageing, making it difficult for government to cope with the demand. This is coupled with shrinking funding for major projects. Nonetheless, we are working tirelessly as government to achieve the 2014 milestone set by the United Nations, to reduce by half the number of people without access to clean water. No amount of sabotage by unscrupulous elements will undermine our efforts.

With the intervention of the Provincial Executive Committee, an amount of R85 million was set aside to address this matter. The Premier, Mr David Mabuza has visited all affected areas to find out the causes of water shortage. He has met with engineers with technical knowledge with the view to unblock sources of the problems. Together with the Department of Water Affairs and Municipalities, we are pulling out all stops to bring water to our communities.

The ability of four of our municipalities to obtain clean audits gives us hope that the third sphere of government is on track to achieve Operation Clean Audit 2014 milestone. This feat could not have been possible without the support of officials from our department, Treasury and the Districts. We have noted the obstacles that hinder municipalities from obtaining clean audits, as highlighted by the Auditor-General. The major two are record and asset management. We have committed ourselves to support municipalities to deal with these two issues as a matter of urgency. The need to strengthen governance cannot be over-emphasised. Comparatively, we have realized that municipalities with all Section 57 Managers, especially the Municipal



MEC MB MASUKU

Manager and the Chief Financial Officer have the potential to obtain clean audits. We are attending to this issue as a matter of urgency. We are mindful of the fact that we are just two years away from the Clean Audit 2014 deadline. The initiative to produce clean audits will go a long way to restore public confidence about the manner in which government institutions utilize the public's purse.

The term of the Provincial leadership of the House of Traditional Leaders (HTL) has come to an end. It is therefore befitting to salute Ikosi Siphohlehlani and his deputy, Kgosi Gadi Mohlala for their sterling leadership. Their contribution in policy formulation on the roles of traditional leaders in a developmental state has been recorded and will be a source of reference for years to come. Their leadership on the oversight role of traditional leaders in a modern society has also been recorded in the annals of our history. I wish to congratulate the newly elected leadership of the house. I hope you will continue the legacy of Ikosi Siphohlehlani and Kgosi Gadi Mohlala.

MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF THE HOD



HOD DAVID MAHLOBO

MEC Madala Masuku has given us marching orders when tabling the department's Policy and Budget speech. The MEC tabled a budget of **R 337,424 million** allocated to the department for the 2012/13 financial year. The allocation has been reduced compared to last financial year's **R488 644 000 allocation**. Without spelling it out, the writing is on the wall: We have to implement cost-curtailement measures without compromising service delivery.

Faced with a very tight budget, MEC Masuku must be commended for a job well done. With innovation, he allocated the biggest slice of the budget to Local Governance, responsible for municipal support. He allocated an amount of **R122, 758 million** to **Local Governance (Programme 2)**, **R89, 529 million** to **Administration (Programme1)**, **R67, 317 million** to **Traditional Institutional Management (Programme 4)**, **R36, 607 million** to **Development and Planning (Programme 3)** and **R16, 355million** to **House of Traditional Leaders (Programme 5)**.

Municipalities need more support to be able to deliver on their mandate. We have done an assessment of our municipalities where in we categorised our municipalities into four categories.

Category 1 - These are formal big towns

Category 2 - These are high population with no adequate infrastructure

Category 3A - These are small towns with potential

Category 3B - These are small towns with challenges requiring ongoing support

With Operation Clean Audit 2014 deadline in sight, the department is already on an over drive to assist municipalities to achieve the milestone, in the following ways:

- We have established a Steering Committee of the department which includes the three District Municipalities, the Office of the Auditor-General, Treasury and Office of the Premier which analyses audit queries for municipalities and address them,
- We have trained members of the Municipal Public Accounts Committee (MPAC) to strengthen oversight,
- We are helping them in filling critical vacancies, especially Section 57 Managers.

We are aware as a department that there are a number of forums established to strengthen the functionality of municipalities, such as the Speakers' Forum, Municipal Managers and Chief Financial Officers' (CFOs). We cherish the hope that these forums will pull municipalities towards Operation Clean Audit 2014.

There is no question about our desire to maintain the winning formula of the four municipalities with clean audits. We are now working tirelessly, even if it means burning the midnight oil, to push the remaining 17 municipalities to achieve the same. We acknowledge the support given by the districts to their local municipalities. We would like to see districts zooming into every space of their locals through twinning agreements in an effort to build municipalities responsive to the needs of our people.

The 2012/13 budget allocation will be used to help restore public confidence in our municipalities. Incorrect billing systems have eroded the confidence, and has consequently led to low revenue collection, leaving most municipalities, especially the rurally-based ones, hopeless. We will help municipalities with data cleansing so that they can issue correct bills for water and other services. With this in mind, they will be able to collect and enhance their revenue for sustainability. With a good revenue they will be able to function on par with other municipalities.

Working together with our communities, I am convinced that we have the potential to establish a responsive, accountable, effective and efficient local government system in Mpumalanga in line with Outcome 9 of the delivery agreement.

MPUMALANGA'S FOUR MUNICIPALITIES OBTAIN CLEAN AUDITS



FLASH BACK: MEC Madala Masuku awarded a certificate and a trophy to Steve Tshwete's Executive Mayor, Cllr Mike Masina for obtaining a clean audit.

With just two years to go before the deadline of Operation Clean Audit, the number of municipalities with clean audits has increased in Mpumalanga. Gert Sibande District Municipality obtained a clean audit, increasing the number of municipalities to four, after Victor Khanye, Ehlanzeni District and Steve Tshwete Municipalities. The four are part of the seven municipalities countrywide with clean audits.

MEC for Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Mr Madala Masuku has congratulated the municipalities for the achievement. "We convey our congratulations to these municipalities for their performance. We also convey our congratulations to those provincial departments who have also obtained clean audits. Equally we are worried about those municipalities that have regressed and obtained disclaimer. Despite these setbacks, we are on course towards meeting our target for Operation Clean Audit 2014. We shall provide all the necessary support to all the struggling municipalities working with Provincial Treasury and the office of the Auditor General," he said.

This initiative seeks to promote good governance, strengthen financial management to achieve operational efficiency and encourage accountability within government. It is a bold government initiative to ensure clean audits, transparency and improved service delivery within government across the country. The ultimate goal is that by 2014, all 283 municipalities and provincial departments within the nine provinces will achieve

clean audits on their annual financial statements. Government hopes that if it continues its commitment to operation clean audit 2014, this will promote a positive attitude and regain the confidence of the public with regard to service delivery.

The Gert Sibande District Municipality says this achievement will build confidence amongst its citizens, increase in the credit rating and attracting of investors. The municipality added: "As this leadership and the management, we do commit ourselves in ensuring that we maintain this achievement going forward as this signifies also qualitative and quantitative achievements".

Ehlanzeni District committed itself to sustain the achievements. Executive Mayor, Cllr Letta Shongwe said: "As EDM we would work harder to make sure that not only us as a district are able to obtain clean audit reports, but also local municipalities to which EDM is mandated".

Obtaining a clean audit is no mean feat. The Victor Khanye Municipality attributed its achievements to legislative compliance and record keeping. "We make an effort to comply with legislation on financial management. We keep records of everything we do to provide as evidence. In addition, we have an experienced Chief Financial Officer (Mr Steve Weber), and a strong Municipal Public Accounts Committee (MPAC) which takes its oversight role quite serious by following up on audit findings," said the acting Municipal Manager, Mr Thabo Mashabela.

MEC MASUKU TABLES THE 2012/13 POLICY AND BUDGET SPEECH



ON COURSE: MEC Masuku stands outside the legislature room after tabling the budget speech.

MEC for Co-operative Governance and Traditional Leaders (COGTA), Mr Madala Masuku has tabled an amount of R 337,424 million for the 2012/13 financial year in the legislature. Challenges and interventions in the 21 municipalities and support for Emakhosi in the province became the focus of MEC Madala Masuku's Policy and Budget speech. In his address, Mr Masuku told members of the legislature and stakeholders that the department's support for the third sphere of government is yielding positive results.

"Once again our municipalities have done us proud in the 2010/11 financial audits. Four of our municipalities have received clean audits these being Ehlanzeni District, Gert Sibande District, Steve Tsh-

wete, and Victor Khanye out of the 11 in the country. This is an improvement from last year, when we had three. We convey our congratulations to these municipalities for their performance," Mr Masuku said. With just two years to go before the deadline kicks in for Operation Clean Audit 2014, the performance of municipalities in delivering clean audits is key.

Despite the good results in the four municipalities, Mr Masuku expressed concern about municipalities that are struggling to produce clean audits. "Equally we are worried about those municipalities that have regressed and obtained disclaimer. Despite these setbacks, we are on course towards meeting our target for Operation Clean Audit 2014.



MUNICIPAL CAPACITY: Dipaliseng Executive Mayor, Cllr Noliqwa Nhlapo (red outfit) and her counterpart, Cllr Matsidiso Morajane, Executive Mayor of Lekwa Municipality (blue jeans) make their way through to the legislature before the start of the budget speech. They are accompanied by Mkhondo Speaker, Cllr Philisiwe Langa (middle) and Msukaligwa Mayor, Cllr Siphongwe.



GUEST OF HONOUR: Chief Lameck Mokoena makes a grand entrance at the legislature on budget speech day.

We shall provide all the necessary support to all the struggling municipalities working with Provincial Treasury and the office of the Auditor General,” he added. Mpumalanga has experienced a fair share of community protests in demand of service delivery. Water is at the centre of the demands. Municipalities have a central role to play in meeting the demands of the protesters.

Mr Masuku says lack of technical skills and poor spending of MIG funds are amongst the obstacles that hinder municipalities to meet the demands of service delivery. “By the end of March 2012 the provincial MIG spending was at 53% of the R1, 177bn to all our 19 local Municipalities. We have plans in place on how to support the affected municipalities to avert the withholding of funds and strengthening infrastructure implementation.” Said Mr Masuku.

The municipalities are still faced with the challenge of the shortage of technical skills on developing their sanitation master plans. Lack of qualified technicians for their operations and maintenance programme is also a challenge hence most of the infrastructure is poorly maintained,”

he said. According to Mr Masuku, it may not be long before the situation is turned around as the department is working closely with Universities, SALGA and the Municipal Infrastructure Support Agency to support municipalities in delivering on their mandate.

The department in conjunction with municipalities are working around the clock to provide solutions for service delivery. However, MEC Masuku is concerned that the nature of the protests are likely to undermine the solutions. “The destruction of property will not solve any problems, instead it’s to the detriment of the community. Our resources as government are limited and they need to be spread throughout all communities. If communities destroy the services that have been provided by government, this is delaying the development of that community as Government cannot go back and provide the same services as there are other areas that need to be serviced with the limited resources,” Mr Masuku told the legislature.

The department, has also contributed to job creation. Through the Community Works Programme (CWP), 6478 jobs have been created and 640 have been

created through the waste management programme. He acknowledged that more work still need to be done, and as such the focus in this financial year for municipalities will be in the following areas:

- Facilitate resolutions on matters of spatial planning, land use management and allocation of stands,
- Focus on improving the financial and administrative capabilities of municipalities,
- Provide training to the newly appointed members of the Municipal Public Account Committees (MPAC),
- Provide training to Ward Committees,
- Assist Municipalities to craft policies, tighten controls and vetting officials to strengthen supply chain management processes,
- Assist all municipalities to focus their IDPs on the delivery of a few but high priority services.

Mr Masuku also tabled progress report on the department’s mandate to resolve claims and disputes of the traditional leadership. He told the legislature: “The Provincial Committee on Traditional Leadership Dispute and Claims has commenced with dealing with disputes and claims. We have received 124 disputes and claims for the entire Province. The Committee has already finalized and made recommendations on 21 disputes and claims.

The Committee will investigate and finalize 15 dispute claims during the new financial year. This year marks the end of the term of the current leadership of the House of Traditional Leaders. Mr Masuku paid tribute to the Chairperson, Ikosi Siphohle Mahlangu and Kgosikgadi Mohlala for their leadership roles: “You have made significant strides in improving the working conditions for our Amakhosi and the communities that lives in areas under the jurisdiction of Traditional Leaders”.

EMAKHOSI ELECT NEW HTL LEADERSHIP

The Mpumalanga House of Traditional Leaders has elected a new leadership at the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature. In terms of Act No 6 of 2005, Section 19, Subsection 2 of the Mpumalanga Provincial House of Traditional Leaders and Local Houses of Traditional Leaders. These elections follows the local houses elections held in May/June 2012.

MEC Mr Madala Masuku chaired proceedings during the elections. He thanked the outgoing executive committee under the leadership of Ikosi SE Mahlangu for their sterling work during their term. Masuku congratulated the House of Traditional Leaders for conducting elections in all three regions without any incidents. He called on Traditional Leaders to help in restoring discipline in our communities because the recent violent service delivery protests that led to destruction of public property is an indication of moral decay in our communities.

The newly elected Chairperson of the House is Kgosi Lameck Mathupa Mokoena from the Mathibela Traditional Council and his deputy is Inkhosi Sandile Godfrey Ngomane from the Hhoyi Traditional Council. The three executive committee members elected are Inkhosi Mpumelelo Bhekumuzi Mnisi – Mantjolo Traditional Council, Ikosi Vuma Ngwane Mahlangu – Ndzundza-Litho Traditional Council and Inkhosi Kokayi Johannes Malaza – Mandlamakhulu Traditional Council. The new leadership will be in office for the next five years. The elected members were sworn in by Judge Justice Malose Mabuse of the North Gauteng High Court.

MEC Masuku has congratulated the new executive committee members and wished them well during their term of office. The National House of Traditional Leaders and the Free State House of traditional Leaders were represented at this important gathering that signalled the end of term of office of the leadership that was elected five years ago.



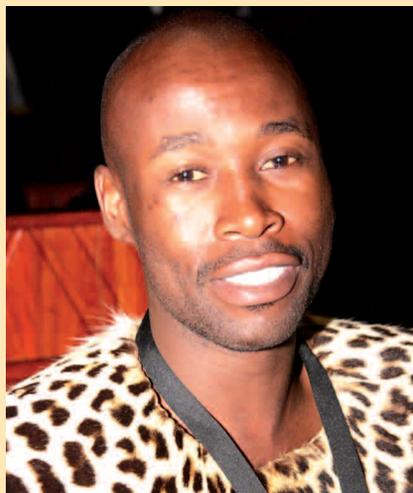
Kgosi LM Mokoena has been elected as the new Provincial Chairperson of the House of Traditional Leaders. He succeeds Ikosi Siphoh Mahlangu who served as Chairperson for five years.



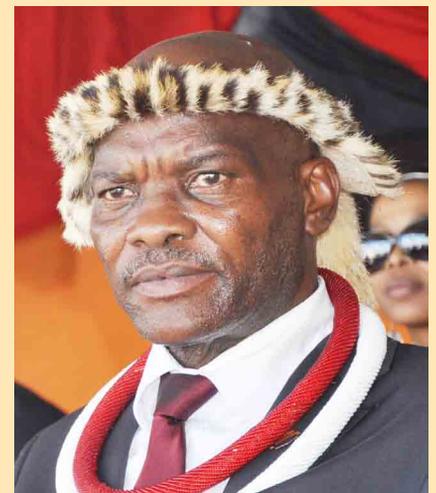
Inkhosi SG Ngomane has been elected as deputy Chairperson. He succeeds Kgosisigadi Mohlala.



Inkhosi SB Khumalo has been elected as the Chairperson for Ehlanzeni Local House.



Inkhosi TB Mthethwa has been elected as the Chairperson for Gert Sibande Local House



Ingwenyama Makhosoke II has been elected as the Chairperson for the Nkangala Local House

PREMIER MABUZA TASKS MEGA TO INVESTIGATE AND COST REQUIRED WATER INFRASTRUCTURE FOR MPUMALANGA



WATER SOLUTION: Premier Mabuza investigates the source of water crisis in the Nkomazi region. He is accompanied by the Nkomazi Exe.cutive Mayor, Cllr Thabisile Khoza.

To address the escalating water crisis in the province, Mpumalanga Premier David Mabuza has tasked the Mpumalanga Economic Growth Agency (MEGA) to investigate as to how much it would cost to upgrade the existing and to build a new water infrastructure where necessary for the province.

The Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) has compiled a report on the water challenges faced by each municipality in the province. The report states amongst others that the infrastructure is ageing and that in many areas, communities had expanded and water distribution and the reservoirs' capacity needed to be increased. It further states that some communities live in areas where water distribution was strictly meant for farming purposes.

The Premier recently visited areas facing a water crisis in Nkomazi and Bushbuckridge to gain first hand experience. MEC for COGTA, Madala Masuku also visited water pumps to investigate the source of water shortage in Msukaligwa and Chief Albert Luthuli Local Municipality.

Mr Mabuza said the water problem was now a crisis in the province and needed urgent and immediate intervention mechanisms. "This is not a normal situation. The people we see jumping on the streets cannot be blamed for that. They are doing it out of pure frustration. We cannot keep on mak-

ing promises which are not fulfilled. We must acknowledge the problem. We cannot deny it. Rather we must accept that something needs to be done immediately," Mr Mabuza said.

He explained that he took it upon himself to lead the process of ensuring water distribution to the people because some municipal leaders were "not focused" and did not prioritize water. "We should not forget that we were elected by the people because they had confidence and trust in us. Let us show that trust in reverse by giving them the deserved basic services. Where we have challenges, let us communicate so that people do not get frustrated. Our people are not complicated; they need clear communication between us and them. People are willing to pay for the services; therefore we need to ensure that we produce quality water constantly and that our billing systems should be in order. That is the only way we could inculcate the culture of paying for the services rendered," said Mr Mabuza.

He added that municipalities needed to devise a strategy to deal with theft of equipment crucial in the provision of water such as transformers. According to the Premier, once MEGA has received funds for working on water infrastructure, municipalities would have to sign a memorandum of understanding for working together as they would be expected to contribute financially.

COGTA In Action



CHANGING LIVES: COGTA's Thusong Service Centre Manager for Louville, Ms Sbongile Mapalala displays solar lights which were installed in the houses of the local Meke-meke community through her intervention.



GENEROSITY: Ehlanzeni District Municipality's Executive Mayor, Cllr Lettie Shongwe hands over food parcels with the help of HOD, Mr David Mahlobo and officials of the Gift of the Givers Foundation at the Mbombela Stadium.



SO HELP ME GOD! The Nkangala Local leadership of the House of Traditional Leadership takes an oath at the end of the elections. The elected leaders are (L-R): Kgosi Moepi, Kgosi Chaane, Kgosi Lefifi and Ikosi Nkwanyane. Chairperson of the local leadership is Ingwenyama Makhosoke II. Advocate Simon Mahlangu (2nd from left) presided over the elections.



CULTURAL PATRONAGE: A group of men in traditional gear accompany Inkhosi Mahlobo of KwaNgabulo Traditional Council during Committee on Claims and Disputes for Traditional Leadership's public hearings in Piet Retief.



ROYAL CLAIM: A community member of the KwaNgabulo neighbourhood makes a presentation before the committee during public hearings for the recognition of the Ntombela-Mahlobo Kingship.



RECOGNITION: A claimant to the Yende Chieftaincy, Tribal Community in Pumbult, Mr Themba Yende submits verbal evidence before the committee during public hearings for the recognition of the Yende Chieftaincy.



DESTRUCTION: HOD, Mr David Mahlobo pays a visit to the regional offices of Bushbuckridge Municipality at Lilydale to witness the graders and municipal offices torched by residents during protests to demand water.



TRANSPARENCY: Gert Sibande Acting Executive Mayor, Cllr Agnes Mnisi and her aide make their way outside the legislature at the end of the Policy and Budget speech function.



TEAM SPIRIT: COGTA's Netball Team prepares to play against the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport in a friendly game.



PREVENTION: COGTA's officials team up with fire-fighters to assemble a machine in a truck during a display session at the end of a fire-fighting workshop at the Disaster Management Centre.



FACT-FINDING-MISSION: MEC Madala Masuku leads a delegation of COGTA, Department of Water Affairs and Msukaligwa Municipality's officials to the Camden Water Treatment plant in Ermelo during the upgrading of Bulk Water line which supplies water to Ermelo and Kriel.



ROAD MAP TO OPERATION CLEAN AUDIT: Cogta' Mr Gregory Sithole (left) and Mr Bassie Strauss co-ordinate municipal support for operation clean audit 2014.

COGTA CREATES JOB OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH WASTE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME



CLEAN ENVIRONMENT: Umjindi officials led by Executive Mayor, Cllr Lazarus Mashaba welcome the refuse removal truck donated by COGTA. HOD, Mr David Mahlobo accompanied by officials delivered it.

Waste management remains one of the challenges facing South Africa. Most municipalities are struggling to deal with waste management, especially in rural areas. Lack of adequate budget to buy refuse removal vehicles and to employ people remains key obstacles for municipalities to deal with the matter.

Despite this, municipalities are racing against time to improve their capacity for waste management by 2016, in line with the National Waste Management Strategy (NWMS), as set out by the Department of Water and Environmental Affairs.

The strategy proposes ways to improve and address key issues experienced in waste management in the country. It aims to achieve the objectives of the Waste Act, which are to minimise the consumption of natural resources and general waste; prevent pollution; promote and ensure the effective delivery of waste services, and achieve integrated waste management reporting and planning.

The NWMS is structured around a framework of set goals, each with targets that

must be met by 2016. The goals are:

- To promote waste minimisation, re-using, recycling and recovery of waste,
- To ensure effective and efficient delivery of waste services,
- To grow the contribution of the waste sector to the green economy,
- To ensure that people are aware of the impact of waste on their health, well-being and the environment,
- To ensure sound budgeting and financial management for waste services,
- To provide measures to remediate contaminated land,
- To establish effective compliance with and enforcement of the Waste Act.

In Mpumalanga, several municipalities have benefitted from the initiatives of the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) aimed at dealing with waste manage-

ment. The department has purchased refuse removal trucks for several municipalities and created jobs for the unemployed as attested to by MEC for COGTA, Mr Madala Masuku during the 2012/13 Policy and Budget speech:

“As part of providing support to our municipalities the department provided 640 work opportunities to the youth in line with the Expanded Public Works Programme as part of waste management. Through this programme we have also provided waste management vehicles and graders to selected municipalities as part of the Executive Council intervention”. The following municipalities have received graders through the waste management programme:

- **Mkhondo** with its seat in Piet Retief,
- **Umjindi** with its seat in Barberton,
- **Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme** with its seat in Volksrust,
- **Themsibile Hani** with its seat in Kwamhlanga,
- **Nkomazi** with its seat in Malelane.

DISPUTE AND CLAIMS COMMITTEE ON TRACK TO RESOLVE CLAIMS

The Provincial Committee on Traditional Leadership Disputes and Claims is hard at work to resolve cases of claims and disputes submitted by traditional authorities in Mpumalanga. The committee was established to resolve disputes and claims related to recognition of Chieftaincies, headmen and rightful traditional leaders in Mpumalanga.

Since its establishment, the committee has moved swiftly to resolve some of them. The Province has 124 disputes and claims for the entire Province. The Committee has already finalized and made recommendations on 21 disputes and claims. The committee will investigate and finalize 15 dispute claims during the new financial year.

Part of the process in resolving cases, include public hearings where claimants are offered a platform to give sworn-in oral or written evidence in support of their claims. Recently, the committee conducted public hearings in the following areas:

- Badplaas for the Duma Traditional Council,
- Piet Retief for the Thonga-Ngwane Kingdom,
- KwaNgabula, in Piet Retief for the Ntombela-Mahlobo Traditional Authority,
- Punbult for the Yende Chieftaincy.

With 124 submissions at its disposal, the 8-member committee has its work cut out in the remaining four years before it can send its recommendations to the Premier for consideration and for a final decision. The committee is staffed by experts with experience in different fields:

- **Mr Bagudi Tolo** (Chairperson) is a former MEC for Local Government, Traffic Control and Traffic Safety in Mpumalanga. Until recently he was a member of Parliament in Cape Town.
- **Dr William Ndlala** is an educationist and a former Rector for Mgwenya and Elijah Mango College of Education,

- **Dr Joseph Thwala** is a academic and a Siswati Lecturer at the University of Venda,
- **Advocate Simon Skhosana** is a legal expert,
- **Ms Sizani Mdluli** is an academic and served in the Nhlapo Commission to resolve similar cases country-wide,

Commissioner for South Africa in Mozambique,

- **Mr Phineas Nxumalo** is an expert on traditional issues.
- Premier David Mabuza has appealed for co-operation and for all parties to accept the outcome of the committee's recommendations at the end.



GROUND RULES: Committee Chairperson, Mr Bagudi Tolo lays down the rules before the start of public hearings on the Ntombela-Mahlobo Chieftaincy at KwaNgabula outside Piet Retief.



TESTIMONY: One of the claimants to the Yende Chieftaincy, Mr Mbulali Yende makes an oral submission to the committee in Punbult.

COGTA PREPARES FOR FIRE SEASON



ROLE PLAYER: COGTA's Mr Jacques Benade takes a leading role during a fire prevention workshop at the Disaster Management Centre.

It has been five years since Mpumalanga experienced a fire disaster in 2007. After five years, fire risk factors have increased rapidly, owing to global warming. Scientists have discovered that global temperatures have increased by 1 degree Fahrenheit over the course of the last century and will likely rise even more rapidly in coming decades. The consequences of these are drought and wildfire.

During the last fire disaster, several farms were destroyed, with live stock and property not spared. In Thaba Chweu Municipality, a Sawmill was gutted by fire in Driekop, while in the Kruger National Park several wild animals were killed. The cause of the fires was attributed to the following:

- **Human Beings (discarded cigarette butts),**
- **Electricity (sparking overhead wires),**
- **Nature (accidental sparks from sawmills).**

In view of the risks associated with veld fires, the department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) organized a workshop to assess the state of readiness to deal with a potential outbreak of veld fires.

The workshop was attended by disaster management authorities in municipalities and fire protection associations. COGTA's Manager for Disaster Management, Mr Jacques Benade says the workshop facilitated strong co-operation between the Provincial Government and Local Municipalities in the fight against veld fires.

"We have agreed that we should investigate funding models for a rapid response in the fight against veld fires," he added. He says delegates further recommended the following strategies:

- That all fire fighting operations must be done in consultation with the Provincial Disaster Management Centre (PDMC),
- That all incidents of fire should be related to the PDMC and be relayed to the National Disaster Management Centre,
- That municipalities should enter into Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to assist each other in cross-boundary fire incidents,
- That all municipalities should finalize their fire-fighting plans.

The department has also embarked on an awareness campaign to warn communities against cigarette butts and other possible causes of fire outbreaks. In addition, it has completed the construction of a Provincial Disaster Management Centre for proper co-ordination in case of a disaster.



FIRE MACHINE: One of the many trucks to be used in a fire emergency was put on display during the workshop.

MOREMELA YOUTH EMPOWERED

The department's Transversal Services/Employee Health and Wellness unit arranged a Youth Empowerment workshop in Moremela's Community Hall. The event was attended by the youth and grabbed the attention of elders within the community. At the core of the workshop was information aimed at educating the youth about the dangers of drugs and Alcohol abuse.

Health experts, Ms Mathanda Matsheke of the South African National Council on Alcohol (SANCA), Department of Health's Ms Sarah Dibakoane and Mr Joseph Malele of Social Development made presentations during the workshop.

Ms Dibakoane, a Social Worker, told the youth that dagga is very dangerous. "Most of the youth have access to dagga because it is planted and harvested right under our nose. It comes at a cheaper price and now look at what it is doing to you guys," she warned. She also touched on the myths and the truth about dagga.



ACTION AGAINST DRUGS: SANCA's Ms Mathanda Matsheke talks to the youth in Leroro



DEBATE: Young people engage health experts about the dangers of drugs in Leroro.

During an interaction session, it became clear to Ms Dibakoane that the youth has information on how drugs affect them negatively. The briefing was an eye opener to most of the youth and elders during questions and answers session.

Most of the youth who attended the workshop are unemployed and some are school drop-outs. Although finding jobs is a major problem for the youth, however they participate actively in their community activities. Moremela Thusong Service Center Manager, Mr Garbad Moremi presented the youth with some job opportunity seculars and explained to them how to start small businesses and sustain them. Matriculants were taught on how to secure scholarships in order to fulfil their dreams.

A Motivational Speaker, Pastor Kgalane told them: "When you loose hope, you loose life. Everyone should have ambitions in order to achieve something in life. We are denying ourselves an opportunity to achieve in life by engaging ourselves in drugs and alcohol. Remember, our characters determines our future", he said.

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VISION

Integrated sustainable people centred development

MISSION

Facilitate and co-ordinate Intergovernmental Structures and Developmental Agencies for Sustainable Integrated Service Delivery through Public Participation and Traditional system of governance

