

Local News



cogta

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OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER



■ *Cogta reviews service delivery in the municipalities*

■ *Newly elected Mayor takes the reins in Thaba Chweu Municipality*

■ *King Makhosonke II ascends to the Ndebele throne*

■ *Cogta commemorates World Aids Day*

■ *The late Lekwa Assistant Administrator laid to rest*

■ *Cogta and Amakhosi embark on study tour*

■ *Cogta management team*

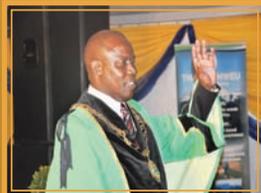


Table of Contents

1. <i>Editorial Comment</i>	1
2. <i>MEC's Foreword</i>	2
3. <i>Message from the HOD's Office</i>	3
4. <i>Cogta reviews service delivery in the municipalities</i>	4
5. <i>Newly elected Mayor takes the reins in Thaba Chweu Municipality</i>	5
6. <i>King Makhosonke II ascends to the Ndebele throne</i>	6
7. <i>Cogta in action</i>	7/8
8. <i>Cogta commemorates world Aids Day</i>	9
9. <i>The late Lekwa Assistant Administrator laid to rest</i>	10
10. <i>Cogta and Amakhosi embark on study tour</i>	11
11. <i>COGTA management team</i>	12

Editorial Comment

The Department and the Local Government Sector is still reeling with shock following the untimely death of the Assistant Administrator for Lekwa Municipality, Mr President Charlie Mnisi. Mr Mnisi left an indelible mark in the crafting of legislation for the establishment of municipalities. Despite the loss, we find solace in his good service in which at the time of his death, he, along with Mr Jabu Sindane, the Administrator, had brought much needed stability to Lekwa Municipality. Through his contribution, Lekwa will be better than yesterday, as is the case with Thaba Chweu Municipality, where he was deployed to assist, previously. We join the throngs of people and family members who mourn his death. May his soul rest in peace!

As we hit the home running for the current term of the local government administration, the department held a Five Year Local Government Review Summit to take stock of the achievements made and the challenges encountered over the past five years. The outcomes indicated that a lot of work has been done however there are still challenges that remain. The summit also resolved that over the next few months leading up to the local government elections municipalities must develop plans of actions with clear milestones of deliverables that can be achieved over this period. The department will be visiting municipalities to assess the progress being made on these plans of action.

The campaign to test 15 million people by June 2011 received a major boost when the department hosted a World Aids Day commemoration. With the theme: 'I am responsible', officials of the department responded positively by participating in a test, conducted by professional nurses at the end of the commemoration.

As the campaign continues, we are all urged to participate in the tests to know our status.

A lot of work has been done in improving the status of the municipalities that have been placed under Administration. So far, only two municipalities out of the five are still under Administration, i.e Lekwa and Thembeisile Hani Municipalities. Pixley ka Seme, Thaba Chweu and Mkhondo Local Municipalities have been handed over, giving credence to hope that municipalities are now better than yesterday. We commend the Administrators for the role they have played in turning around the municipalities.

Despite this, MEC Mr Madala Masuku has committed the department to support municipalities continuously, by monitoring them. His view is that we should not wait until municipalities collapse to intervene. However, this can only happen if the capacity of the municipalities is strengthened, by inter alia, filling in vacant posts, especially those of Municipal Managers and Section 57 Managers. By filling these vacancies, the capacity of municipalities will be strengthened to ensure that funds allocated for the implementation of projects registered in the IDPs are implemented to their finality.

Disclaimer:

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We would like to hear from you

Send your comments and suggestions to the Editor on the following e-mail address: gpmthethwa@mpg.gov.za or contact us telephonically. Visit our Website on: <http://cgta.mpg.gov.za>

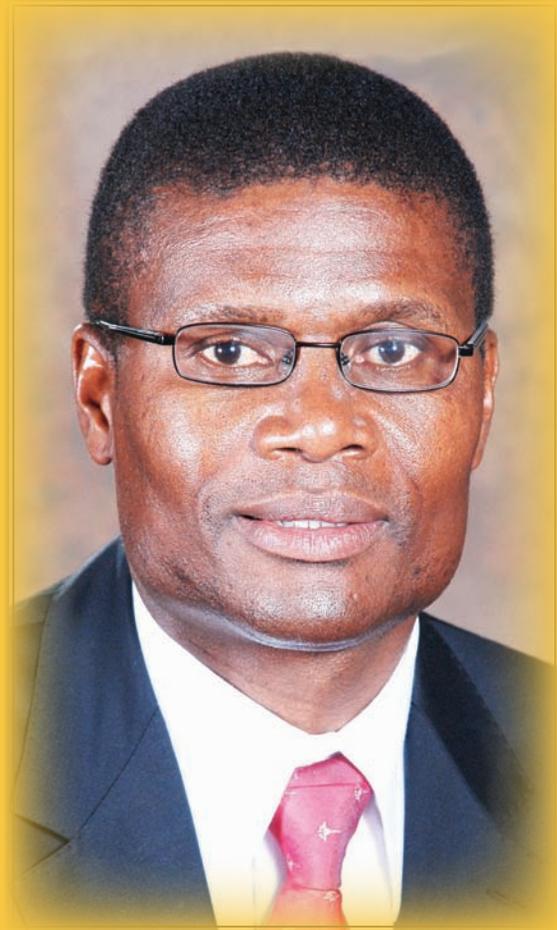
MEC's Foreword

The recent Five Year Local Government Review Summit, held at the Ingwenyama Lodge outside White River gave us an opportunity to make an assessment of the impact that the third sphere of government is making in the lives of our people. The summit unpacked the success achieved so far in service delivery and the challenges thereof over the past five years. The next step is to support them unblock the obstacles that inhibit service delivery as we stand on the dawn of a new chapter of local government. In the wake of the elections that will be held soon, it is crucial to prepare a hand over of an institution of municipalities whose contribution to the struggle to improve the lives of our people cannot be questionable.

An analysis of Local Government system in Mpumalanga has shown us that municipalities are experiencing challenges in spending funds allocated to them. The Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) is one example. These funds are aimed at improving the basic infrastructure, some of which is old and has to be replaced or rehabilitated. Failure to utilize the funds undermines the plan to improve the infrastructure. The inability to spend funds allocated highlights a challenge of planning and financial management. It cannot be correct that we have funds unspent, whereas we still have many people without the basic such as water, electricity, roads etc.

The glaring picture of a high volume of vacancies in municipalities is a cause for concern. This on its own is a source of handicap for the municipalities not to perform well, not only in the area of financial management, but on service delivery. Non-filling of vacancies for Municipal Managers and other Section 57 Managers, aggravates the situation. So the sooner we deal with these matters the better. We are working closely with municipalities to assist them close these gaps. The department is poised to support municipalities in their quest to improve the lives of our people. Therefore let us all join hands by working together to make Local Government Everybody's Business.

I would like to congratulate King Makhosoke II of the Ndebele nation for being the first to be handed over a certificate of recognition after the release of the Nhlapho Commission report. The recognition could not have come at a better time. King Makhosoke II is a catalyst of development in his area. He has partnered with community structures in the different wards as part of the development agenda.



MEC, Mr Madala Masuku

Consequently, these structures meet from time to time to report back and unblock stumbling blocks that inhibit service delivery. His zest to champion the development cause, has seen luminaries in our society, such as former Reserve Bank Governor, Mr Tito Mboweni, supporting these efforts. On the same score, the department is determined to give Amakhosi the necessary support in their efforts to contribute to the government's rural development programme in the rural areas, home to the poorest of the poor.

On a sad note, we send condolences to the bereaved families of two royal houses following the death of Chief Mkhathshwa of Mhlaba Traditional Council from Magogeni and Chief Khoza of the Jongilanga Traditional Council from Bushbuckridge. We also send condolences to the family of the late Chief Whip of the ANC at the Ehlanzeni District Municipality, Cllr Johan Ndlovu, who was laid to rest in Hlu-vukani. The department joins the two royal houses and the District in mourning their untimely death. May their souls rest in peace.

Message from the Office of the HOD



HOD, Mr MD Mahlobo

The department is poised to make a meaningful contribution to the development of rural areas, under Emakhosi. The recent trip undertaken by Emakhosi and officials of the department to the North West, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal to study the role of Amakhosi in rural development is testimony to this. I am happy that as a department we have taken heed of President Jacob Zuma's call to develop rural areas. The visit comes in the wake of the gazetted names of Emakhosi in Mpumalanga who are now participating in the municipal councils to push for rural development. Rural development has for a long time been pushed to the periphery, forcing our people in those areas to migrate to the urban areas in search of a better life. We are racing against time to turn the tide and together with Emakhosi, we can do more to make the rural development plan a success.

We have moved a step further to consolidate efforts aimed at improving the Local Government Sector. The establishment of a Rapid Response Unit is one of them. The unit's mandate is to put systems in place that will detect problems in the municipalities before they collapse. The unit will work closely with the municipalities and advise the department about problem areas to be dealt with urgently. I am happy that most of our efforts have found expression in

the municipalities. These include the implementation of a Turn Around Strategy crafted from the Local Government Summit in Secunda, which in turn led to municipalities developing Municipal Turn Around Strategy.

We can all be rest assured that municipalities are better than yesterday. We just have to tighten the loose ends to make them even much more better. The recent signing of the performance agreements between the Premier, the Honourable David Mabuza and Members of the Executive Committee (MECs) sends a strong message that the public service will no longer be the same. Our MEC, the Honourable Mr Madala Masuku has committed our department to also improve on its performance, when he signed an agreement at the Crocodile Inn. The signing ceremony comes at the time when a number of initiatives have been put in place to improve the performance of the department and municipalities. These include the performance agreements entered into with Executive Mayors and the establishment of the Municipal Public Accounts Committees (MPAC), which will play an oversight role. Last year, we committed ourselves to Operation Clean Audit 2014, which will see municipalities, provincial departments and State Owned Enterprises (SoE) producing unqualified reports. We will not rest until this is achieved. There has been a gradual improvement of financial management by the municipalities over the years. Some have graduated from disclaimers by the Auditor-General to the state where they produce qualified reports. We will not rest until they produce unqualified reports.

With the introduction of the MPACs, which will tighten the grip on accountability, surely, the situation is bound to improve. On the same vein, I appeal to all structures and authorities of municipalities to support the MPACs. I appeal to the Executive in particular to co-operate when required to do so. I also appeal to members of the MPAC to work in the interest of the public.

We are still struggling to come to terms with the death of the Lekwa Municipality's Assistant Administrator, Mr President Charlie Mnisi. He was instrumental in the department's efforts to turn around the Thaba Chweu and Lekwa Local Municipalities. Local government is poorer without him. It is people like him that we turned to when we sought intervention to deal with challenges. May his soul rest in peace.

DEPARTMENT REVIEWS SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE MUNICIPALITIES

Delivery of services such as water, improvement of the infrastructure and power supply came under the spotlight during a one day Local Government Review Summit at the Ingwenyama Lodge outside White River. The summit was organized by the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) to review the success of municipalities and the challenges on service delivery issues. It was attended by Executive Mayors, Councillors and Senior government and municipal officials. MEC Madala Masuku told delegates about the need to speed up service delivery.

The aim of the summit was to take stock of what local government has achieved, what have been the shortcomings and the reasons for these since the current administration came into office in 2006, identify burning issues that have not been addressed and to develop an action plan of quick wins for the next five months before the current term of local government ends.

MEC Madala Masuku said it was important to call this summit at this time, as it allows the province and municipalities to do an assessment of the work they have done over the past five years. "When the current local government administration came into office in 2006, they did so based on the commitments made in the manifesto. This summit has enabled us to evaluate how far we have come on the commitments made. The summit has also enabled us to prepare issues that have not been addressed by the current local government and will be handed over to the administration that will come in after the elections for them to pursue" said Masuku. He further appealed to the Mayors and Councillors to use their remaining term of office to work harder to be able to leave a legacy.

"We promised people during the 1994 election campaign that we will provide them with water, electricity, jobs, improve the infrastructure. We also promised them that we will improve their lives. However, even today, when you read newspapers, watch TV and listen to the radio, communities are still complaining about these issues. If we fail to deliver on these promises, it creates a breeding ground for activities such as espionage where certain individuals mobilize people to revolt against the government," Mr Masuku warned.

The incidents of unrests that were experienced by the province indicated that there were shortcomings on the performance of some municipalities." We cannot over emphasise the importance of giving regular feedback to the communities so that they are aware of progress being made on the implementation of projects and the challenges that are encountered by municipalities. We must continue to familiarise our communities on what municipalities are doing" said Masuku.

During the summit, the Head of Department, Mr David Mahlobo presented a report which reflected lack of spending on allocated funds by some municipalities on projects that have to improve the lives of our people. Mr Mahlobo cited the following reasons for the lack of spending:

- Poor planning;
- Late registration of projects;
- Slow municipal procurement processes;
- Lack of technical skills.

Poor financial management which often leads municipalities to obtain qualified reports, was also highlighted as one of the challenges that inhibit service delivery. Of the 21 municipalities, 11 of them operate without Municipal Managers. Other factors include lack of resources and corruption. Municipalities with a low revenue base, appealed for financial support. However, MEC Masuku advised them to put mechanisms in place to raise funds. "In some areas, we have residential areas of wealthy people who have running water for 24 hours, but are treated as indigents. You need to look at such areas and make those people to pay for the service. By so doing, you will be making money that is needed to sustain your municipality.

All municipalities have identified projects that must be prioritised and be addressed within the next few months leading up to the Local Government Elections, using their available resources. These projects include the completion of all MIG projects, provision of water through boreholes and water tankers, addressing sanitation backlogs, electrification of some communities, data cleansing to correct household accounts, filling of critical vacant funded posts, gravelling of roads, fixing of roads damaged by potholes, capacity building of municipal officials and finalising supplementary valuation rolls. MEC Masuku will continuously monitor the implementation of the delivery of the projects that have been identified by municipalities over the next few months.



THINK-TANK: Delegates from Nkangala Municipalities take stock of the performance of their municipalities during the summit.

NEWLY ELECTED MAYOR TAKES OVER THE REINS IN THABA CHWEU MUNICIPALITY



READY TO GOVERN: Newly elected Mayor of Thaba Chweu Municipality, Cllr Moses Marobela and his wife, Rachel face the audience after taking an oath during his inauguration ceremony in Lydenburg.

Newly elected Thaba Chweu Municipality's Executive Mayor, Cllr Moses Marobela has assumed responsibility of leading the municipality. Cllr Marobela was inaugurated as the Mayor officially in Lydenburg. His election marks the end of the period in which the municipality was placed under Administration as an intervention by the Provincial Cabinet to restore it to its former glory.

The excitement, cheering and ululation in the venue of the inauguration was in total contrast of the ugly scene of violent protests that once dominated Thaba Chweu Municipality. Despite the unique scenic natural beauty of Lydenburg, which was a source of attraction for tourists, the town once represented a war zone as residents burnt tyres and barricaded the roads leading to the town. Residents complained about corruption and demanded an investigation into the financial management of the municipality. This led to the removal of the former Mayor, Cllr Clara Ndlovu and several other councillors.

Through the intervention of the Provincial Cabinet, which led to the appointment of the Administrator, Mr Terrence Mokale, the situation has been turned around. The following systems have been put in place as a response to the challenges of Thaba Chweu:

- Credible Integrated Development Plan (IDP);
- Credit control;
- Public Participation;
- Performance Management System (PMS).

Several senior officials were suspended and some of their cases are pending as investigations are underway. The investigations were precipitated by allegations of fraud in the wake of a mysterious disappearance of money amounting

to more than three million rand. The allegations also led to the uprisings by the residents demanding action against officials implicated in corruption. Although the situation has been normalised, the challenge for the municipality is to retain the gains. This was acknowledged by Cllr Marobela in his inaugural speech. "Speeding of basic services to our people is on top of our priority. Building of infrastructure, which was interrupted by the protests, through the Public Works' programme is also important. We commit ourselves that we shall not turn back," Cllr Marobela said. He further applauded Mr Mokale and the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) for their efforts in rebuilding Thaba Chweu. He added that the municipality will work with everyone by consulting and giving feedback.

Marobela's predecessors, the late Moshe Mashego and Cllr Clara Ndlovu vacated the position without completing their terms. This was raised as a cause for concern by MEC for Cogta, Mr Madala Masuku. He appealed to the local community to support the Mayor and the council. "It is high time that you now take a decisive decision to support your leadership," said Mr Masuku. Turning to Cllr Marobela, Mr Masuku said one of the expectations from him, is to lead a corrupt-free municipality. "President Jacob Zuma and Premier D.D Mabuza want us to do more with less. The leadership has adopted a zero-tolerance to corruption. You would have played a big role by delivering a corrupt-free municipality," Mr Masuku added.



DIRECTION: MEC Madala Masuku delivers a key note address during the inauguration.

KING MAKHOSOKE II ASCENDS TO THE NDEBELE THRONE



HAND OVER: Minister Shiceka displays the certificate of recognition before handing it over to King Makhosoke. Ikosi Siphoh Mahlangu, Hosi Kutama and Premier David Mabuza look on.

Enoch Mabena, whose royalty name is King Makhosoke II of the Ndebele nation, joins a number of Kings in the country as one of the traditional leaders to be recognized by the Government of South Africa. His recognition comes in the wake of the release of the Nhlapo Commission Report by President Jacob Zuma in which his name also appeared amongst the recognized Kings and Chiefs in the country. Minister of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta), Mr Sicele Shiceka handed over a certificate of recognition to the King, making him the first to receive it after the release of the report. Minister Shiceka was accompanied by Premier David Mabuza, MEC Madala Masuku, HOD David Mahlobo and Senior government officials.

Amakhosi from different corners of Mpumalanga and the local community, clad in traditional gear attended the function in large numbers. Maidens graced the occasion by singing for the King, while praise singers took turns in honouring him.

Minister Shiceka told the crowd that the recognition of King Makhosoke marks the beginning of a new chapter in the history of the Ndebele nation to have a King at the level of Ingwenyama. "This certificate recognizes King Makhosoke as the King of the Ndebeles in the country. All Ndebeles, whether they are in Europe or elsewhere will pay allegiance to King Makhosoke II as their King," Minister Shiceka said.

South Africa is home to multiracial groups, making it a diverse country with different cultures and languages. Some

of the ethnic groups, such as Swazis, Batswana, Basotho and Shangaans, share these values with similar ethnic in neighboring countries such as Lesotho, Botswana, Mozambique and Swaziland. Except the Xhosas, Zulus, Vendas and the Ndebeles, the other ethnic groups have to pay allegiance to their Kings in the neighbouring countries, according to Minister Shiceka.

King Makhosoke told his subjects and the visitors that the Ndebele nation has been in existence since the 1300s. He appreciated government for recognizing the Ndebele royalty. "I want to thank the President (President Jacob Zuma) and Minister Shiceka for returning us to our rightful status. The certificate is not mine, but for the Kingdom of the Ndebele. My responsibility is to ensure the unity of the Ndebeles," the King said. He added that the history of his nation is distorted and therefore one of his responsibilities will be to correct it.

The following Kings are also in line for the certificate of recognition:

- King Mphephu Ramabulane of VhaVenda;
- King King Zwelibovu of Amapondo;
- King Victor Thulare of Ba-Pedi;
- King Zwelibanzi Dalindyabo of AmaThembu;
- King Sigcau of AmaXhosa.

Meanwhile, Minister Shiceka announced the appointment of a Commission to look at the levels below the Kings. He says the commission will investigate issues around traditional leaders who qualify to be recognized as Chiefs and headmen (tindvuna). He says the commission will be constituted by five people and will report its findings before the end of 2014.



CELEBRATION: Ndebele maidens came out in numbers to witness the ceremony.

COGTA



ON AIR: MEC Madala Masuku engages callers on departmental interventions during a talk back show on Ligwalagwala FM. Host, Mr Siphso Motha facilitates the conversation.



BEREAVEMENT: Mourners bid the late Lekwa Municipality's Assistant Administrator, Mr President Mnisi farewell during a memorial service at Ehlanzeni District's Disaster Management Centre.



CENTRE STAGE: Officials join in a song reminiscent of the struggle period during the year end function before MEC Madala Masuku delivers a speech.



KING'S PALACE: Nkangala District's Executive Mayor, Cllr Speedy Mashilo (left) and MEC Madala Masuku attended the inauguration of the Ndebele Royalty, King Makhosoke II at Kwamhlanga.



BENCHMARK: A delegation of Amakhosi and Cogta's officials visits the Royal Bafokeng in Rustenburg, North West during a study tour.



HOT SEAT: Newly elected Thaba Chweu Mayor, Cllr Moses Marobela and the Speaker, Cllr Selinah Mashego address the media at the end of his inauguration in the Council Chamber.

in Action



SUPPORT: Cogta's officials prepare logistics ahead of the Municipal Public Accounts Committee in Middleburg.



AUDIT SUPPORT: Nkomazi Municipal Councillors, attended the inaugural summit of the Municipal Public Accounts Committee in Middleburg. (L-R) Cllr Michael Letsoalo, Cllr Grace Mashaba and Cllr Mercy Khoza.



INK ON PAPER: MEC Madala Masuku signs the performance agreement on behalf of Cogta as Premier David Mabuza looks on at the Crocodile Inn.



WORKING TOGETHER: Cogta's officials in the Corporate Chief Directorate, share a lighter moment at the end of a team building exercise in Hazyview.



HEALTH STATUS: Cogta officials attended the World Aids Day commemoration in support of the victims of the disease.



ATTENTION TO DETAILS: Dr J.S Moroka Municipality's Speaker, Cllr Chillli and Executive Mayor, Cllr Inah Masombuka analyze presentations during the Local Government Review summit in White River.

Cogta commemorates World AIDS Day

The Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) commemorated World Aids Day by remembering those who have died from the disease and sharing grief for people infected by the disease. World Aids Day is commemorated annually and this year, the theme was: 'We are responsible'. The fight against the disease was intensified when President Jacob Zuma launched an HIV test and counseling campaign on 25 April 2010 as part of government's strategy to fight the disease. At the time, President Zuma said the campaign will target 15 million people by June 2011. At the time of going to print, more than 4,68 million people have been tested, and over 800 000 tested positive for HIV. In Mpumalanga, the campaign was launched in Standerton by Premier David Mabuza.

As government steps up efforts to fight the deadly disease, the stigma attached to HIV/AIDS is still entrenched and its origin remains a mystery.

During Cogta's commemoration of World Aids Day, Chief Director for Corporate Services, Ms Hellen Shube appealed to officials of the department to help conquer the stigma. "Research shows that one person out of two is positive with the disease. And this does not mean we should segregate such people. We need to support and take care of them," she said. Ms Shube further urged officials to take heed of the warnings in the fight against the spread of the disease. "We must not take for granted the information about the use of condoms, more so because they (condoms) are provided free of charge and are readily available," she said emphatically. She jokingly added: "The condoms are user-friendly, and do not inhibit the fantasy during the act", much to the delight of the audience.

During the commemoration, an Aids activist, who is living with the disease, Ms Thandeka Magagula encouraged officials to embrace people living with the disease, when she delivered a personal experience. "I was diagnosed with the disease more than ten years ago. I am married and have two children. Both of them are negative. Unlike people who treat others with the disease in a negative way, my husband never looked at my status. He gives me the necessary support, and I urge you to do the same," urged Thandeka.

The cure for HIV/AIDS is yet to be found. As scientists and medical experts are hard at work to find a cure for the

disease, government has broadened the HIV/AIDS programme. The programme entails the following:

- All HIV positive pregnant women will be initiated on ARV treatment at CD4 count of 350;
- All infants that are HIV positive will be started on ARV treatment regardless of CD4 count;
- All HIV and TB co-infected patients will be started on ARV at CD4 count of 350 and less.



REMEMBRANCE: Ms Thandeka Magagula addresses officials of the department on AIDS matters.



SONG OF PRAISE: Cogta officials burst into a song as part of the commemoration.

Lekwa Assistant Administrator is laid to rest

The late Lekwa Municipality's Assistant Administrator, Mr President Charlie Mnisi has been laid to rest. Mnisi, an attorney by profession died on 9 January 2011 after an injury at the Riverside Mall. At the time of his death, Mr Mnisi was an Assistant Administrator at the Lekwa Municipality, in Standerton, appointed by the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta). Family members, Senior government officials, members of the Legal fraternity and his former SRC members from the then Turfloop University attended a memorial service organized in his honour at the Ehlanzeni District Disaster Management Centre. Most of them rendered eulogies that described his role in the society.

Mr Mnisi is credited for his role in the Local Government sector. He carved a niche as a knowledgeable person on municipal laws. This was amplified by the Head of Department, Mr David Mahlobo. "His contribution through his profession, contributed to the establishment of the local government in Mpumalanga. He was instrumental in the formulation of laws governing the local government sector," Mr Mahlobo told mourners. Mr Mnisi was deployed to the Thaba Chweu Municipality and most recently, to the Lekwa Municipality when the municipalities were placed under Administration by the Provincial Executive. Mr Mahlobo said that local government is better than yesterday in the province, because of his contribution. "We will pick the spear where he left it off," he said.

During his student days at the Turfloop University, Mr Mnisi is credited for his role in the mobilization of students to fight against oppressive laws.

"He was on the forefront of students' struggle in that campus. When the Student Representative Council (SRC) was banned, he mobilized students to form a structure that would serve as their voice. At that time, no one dared to challenge the status quo, as an army of soldiers had camped inside the campus," said Mr Irvin Phenyane, a former student. He told mourners how "Khampyepye", as he was affectionately known, won the hearts of students, irrespective of their political affiliations. "He was a keen golf player. We were surprised how he learnt to play the game. We discovered later that he befriended a member of the Azanian Students' Congress, (AZASCO), who took him from time to time to play the game. When we questioned his friendship with the opposition, he just laughed and said he is studying their *modus operandi*," Phenyane added. Although he was deeply involved in student politics, Mr Mnisi managed to complete his law degree and an Honours (B Proc) degree in a record time, making him one of the brightest students at the time. Mr Phenyane said no grave is big enough to bury him.

He is also credited for the establishment of the Black Lawyers' Association (BLA) in Mpumalanga. His contribution to the legal fraternity was also acknowledged by the Deputy Judge President of the Northern Gauteng High Court, Judge Phineas Mojapelo. "He was destined to occupy more positions. And through his efforts, a permanent sitting of the High Court in Nelspruit is in the pipeline," Judge Mojapelo said.



The late, Mr President Charlie Mnisi



LIVING MEMORY: Programme Director, Mr Vusi Mashabane takes lead of proceedings at the memorial service.

AMAKHOSI AND COGTA EMBARK ON A STUDY TOUR

A delegation of Amakhosi and officials of the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) have visited three provinces on a study tour to learn best practices on matters of Traditional Governance. The delegation visited the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and the North West to study the involvement of the Traditional Leaders on rural development, and how it has worked for them. During the tour, the delegation learnt the following best practices:

KwaZulu-Natal:

- Traditional Councils have been reconstituted with their existing publicised boundaries.
- Traditional Leadership have established synergistic partnership with municipalities on public participation;
- Committees of the Provincial House and Local Houses of Traditional Leaders are established in line with portfolios and standing committees that are linked to the Departments;
- The land is owned by Ingwenyama Trust on behalf of all Traditional Councils and in terms of the Ingwenyama Trust Act and that Traditional Councils are benefiting out of the trust through business plans;
- Development is driven through IDPs. However, if it involves areas of one or more areas of Traditional Councils, the municipalities will facilitate that the affected Traditional Councils must take resolutions supporting such development. It will then be referred to the Local House of Traditional Leaders for coordination and guidance at implementation;
- Izinduna are not allowed to allocate residential or business sites. It is actually a dismissible offence should an Induna allocate land;
- Secretaries of Traditional Councils are paid monthly salaries amounting to R1 100.00 by the Department of Local Government and Traditional Affairs;
- Offices of Traditional Councils are further used as Thusong Service Centres.
- Offices of Traditional Councils and homes of Traditional Leaders are built by the government.

Eastern Cape:

- Traditional Councils are encouraged to establish trusts as legal entities and business plans to drive development;
- Although finance in the Department is centralised, however financial management is performed in the house and programme managers are responsible for their budget;
- The Chief Directorate of the Traditional Affairs is huge with six Senior Managers that provide support to the institution of traditional leadership;
- Secretaries of Traditional Leaders are employed by the Department;

- All structures of the wives of Amakhosi (Tindlunkulu) have been established. They have established a legal entity (trust) and they are sponsoring a number of projects managed by women.

North West

- Rural development and urban renewal are driven by Traditional Councils;
- Natural resources within the land of traditional communities are used effectively for the betterment of the respective traditional communities;
- The Department is paying a stipend of R 2000 to the headmen;
- The Department is paying a sitting allowance of R 590 for local houses members;
- The Department is paying a sitting allowance of R 350 for traditional councils;
- The Department is paying allowances of R 1200 per employee of traditional councils;
- Traditional leaders are participating in municipal councils; however, some have since been withdrawn due to the disparities in terms of paying sitting allowances.

With 59 Traditional Councils, the Provincial Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs has made strides on supporting Traditional Leaders. The department has gazetted names of Traditional Leaders for participation in Municipal Councils in terms of Section 81 of the Municipal Structures' Act. The department has also renovated several offices of Amakhosi and has offered training for them on Financial Management, as part of capacity development. The plan to purchase vehicles for Amakhosi has been finalised.



LEARNING FROM THE BEST: Chairperson of the House of Traditional Leaders in Mpumalanga, Ikosi Siphohle Mhlangu (middle) leads a delegation of Amakhosi and Cogta officials to the Mqgefha Graveyard in East London, in the Eastern Cape.

COUNCILLORS TO PLAY OVERSIGHT ROLE IN MUNICIPALITIES

A new chapter in the accountability of municipal finances has been opened in Mpumalanga with the establishment of the Municipal Public Accounts Committees (MPAC's). A function to inaugurate them took place in Middleburg, in the Nkangala District offices, making Mpumalanga the second province after Gauteng to establish the municipal structures. The role and purpose of these Municipal Public Accounts Committees is to provide assurance to the public that public funds are being managed properly; that funds were spent as intended; and that there has been best possible value received from funds spent.

The MPAC's have been established to:

- strengthen oversight;
- improve compliance to legislations, i.e Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA)
- hold executive accountable for non delivery of services;
- respond to operation clean audit 2014.

Municipalities still face a number of challenges with regards to financial management. These challenges include, among others, inadequate skills in the areas of planning, budgeting, public financial management, poor interface between financial and non financial information, inability to manage cash flow and inadequate skills in credit and debt management, poor financial accounting, poor filing and record keeping, duplication of payments and inadequate corporate governance systems.

The Auditor General's (AG) report has also again highlighted areas of weakness, especially on matters of internal control environments, poor performance information and the absence of systems. These gaps have a negative impact on service delivery, good governance and accountability.

The establishment of the MPAC's is one of the many initiatives by government aimed at improving the financial management and accountability of the local government sector. It is one of the latest initiatives introduced by government, after the introduction of Operation Clean Audit 2014 aimed at bringing to an end the cycle of qualified reports by 2014, amongst all spheres of government.

Chairperson of the Association of Public Accounts Committee (APAC), Mr Fish Mahlalela outlined the role of MPAC's as a "body that will focus on how budgets are used, how much revenue was made, any underspending, non-compliance to prescripts of financial irregularities'. Mr Mahlalela appealed to the members to exercise their functions without fear or favour. "You must read documents submitted to you to be fully informed. Where there are glaring issues, you must pick them up and deal with them with-

out fear or favour. Your role is to protect the public purse," Mr Mahlalela told councillors.

In terms of the flow of the process to deal with financial issues of the municipality, the Speaker will refer annual reports, Auditor-General's reports and Annual Financial Statements to the MPAC for a review, develop questions and send them to the Executive to respond. Once an analysis of the response has been done, members of the MPAC will then convene a hearing for the Executive to account. The submission will then be used to make findings and compile a report to be sent to the Speaker, which will then be sent to council for adoption and implementation. The members are expected to undergo training to execute the oversight function with understanding. Mr Mahlalela committed the APAC to assist with the training.



AUDIT QUERY: APAC Chairperson, Mr Fish Mahlalela emphasizes the need for the protection of public funds in municipalities.



IMPLEMENTATION: Councillors are to be trained for the functions of the Municipal Public Accounts Committee.

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