

Local News



cogta

Department:
Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs
MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

FOURTH QUARTER

ISSUE NO. 4



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- much-needed facility to access services. Although the
- ATMs are prone to vandalism, however, we wish to inform
- the Banking Sector that the department has committed it-
- self to putting security measures in place to ward off crimi-
- nals in the TSCs.

- As the government's rural development plan gains mo-
- mentum, the department, which is the custodian of tradi-
- tional leadership, is training Emakhosi for the realization of
- the plan. The recent graduation of Emakhosi who attended
- training on Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) and Lo-
- cal Economic Development (LED) is the end result of the
- department's plan. We wish Emakhosi success as they put
- into practice what they have learnt.

- The department wishes Chief Mathupa Lameck Mokoena,
- Chief Hlungu Richard Nkosi and Chief Roy Abneri Nkosi
- success in their new roles as members of the Provincial
- House of Traditional Leaders (HTL). They assumed their
- responsibilities as members after a swear-in ceremony
- conducted by Judge President Ngoepe of the High Court
- in Pretoria.

- As we prepare for the Local Government elections, we
- wish to appeal to all the potential voters to make use of the
- opportunity to cast the ballot for the consolidation of de-
- mocracy. Voting forms part of public participation on gov-
- ernance issues. Local Government is a vital cog in the de-
- velopmental state machinery and it is where most people
- have direct and frequent contact with government services.

- The department is determined to be a centre of excellence.
- Working together we can do more to make that vision a
- reality.

- The department welcomes the new employees who have
- joined the department during the last Financial year. As
- Public servants, imbued with the spirit of service delivery,
- we believe that you will take the lead in championing the
- service delivery agenda of the department for the benefit
- of our people.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

We wish to commend the Disaster Management team in the department for acting expeditiously in the distribution of relief material to the victims of the storm disaster in the Albert Luthuli, and Bushbuckridge Municipalities.

The Disaster Management Section, monitored the situation with a hawk's eye for a speedy response in the case of any casualty. They also embarked on an information campaign to warn communities about the dangers of the storm. We send condolences to the families of the two victims who died in Dundonald in the Albert Luthuli Municipality and two who died in Songani in Bushbuckridge Municipality due to the storms. May their souls rest in peace.

The department commends the decision of the Banking Sector to repair the Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) that were vandalized in the different Thusong Service Centres (TSCs).

The ATMs were bombed by criminals who were hell-bent on committing crime, robbing our people an opportunity to use the

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: gpmthethwa@mpg.gov.za. Visit our website: <http://cgta.mpg.gov.za>. Call us at: 013 766 6572

MEC's FOREWORD



HON MEC, MR MB MASUKU (MPL)

March 2010 officially marks the end of the current Local Government Administration that came into office in 2006. We have held a 5 year Local Government Review Summit to take stock of the achievements made since 2006. Huge achievements have been made in strengthening local government over the past five years. Today many more people have access to electricity, water, basic sanitation and housing. We acknowledge that much more can still be done and we are confident that the administration that will come in after the local government elections on 18 May 2011 will build on the achievements made by their predecessors.

President Jacob Zuma has declared 2011 as the year of job creation through economic growth. During his State of the Nation Address, he charged all government institutions including State Owned Enterprises to also make this a reality. The private sector is also an important partner in this mission.

The President's declaration was also echoed by Premier David Mabuza in his State of the Province Address. The President's call comes at the time when we are hard at work, putting mechanisms in place that will engineer municipalities to respond to the service delivery challenges. We are quite certain that the ground work has been done to put municipalities at the point where they can respond positively to the President's call. The signing of delivery agreements with Executive Mayors is one such example.

As the declaration by the President gains momentum, municipalities must start reflecting on what has been achieved in the area of job creation. Our assessment on the ground indicates that there are potential opportunities that we can leverage on to make this a reality. Already municipalities are contributing to job creation through the awarding of contracts and tenders to Small, Medium Enterprises (SMMEs). This can be harnessed into major job opportunities, as these businesses create them.

We have noted with enthusiasm the outcome of the research by Treasury over the awarding of contracts, sourced from municipalities in Mpumalanga, which indicate that a total of 144 contracts to the value of more than R 900 million have been awarded since 2004. Of this, 10% of the bids, constituting 13% of the monetary value, were awarded to Historically Disadvantaged Individuals (HDIs) with no franchise. 43% of the bids, constituting 38% of the monetary value, were awarded to women. 37% of the bids, constituting 41% of the monetary value, were awarded to black companies.

The President has also charged us to fill in all vacancies. The department will identify critical vacant posts and they will be prioritised for filling. We will also move closer to the municipal space to assist municipalities to carry out the President's instructions. Lack of capacity, is often cited as one of the challenges that inhibit service delivery at local government level, so this will be an opportunity to address the challenge. We have a number of graduates who are battling to crack into the job market, so as we respond to the President's call, we appeal to the municipalities to consider these graduates, even in the form of internships.

The outstanding debt owed to municipalities remains a major area of concern, and this is crippling municipalities. Some of these municipalities, have a low revenue base. Some are also struggling to off-set debts owed to Eskom. A total of R74.4 million is owed to our municipalities and this is unacceptable. Breaking this figure down, reveals the following:

- **Gert Sibande District is owed R23.2 million;**
- **Ehlanzeni District is owed R38.2 million;**
- **Nkangala District is owed R12,9 million**

Of great concern is that some of the money is owed by government departments. The department through the inter-governmental structures will put the matter on the agenda so that it can receive the attention it deserves.

Our resolve to support the institution of Traditional Leadership remains unwavering. We have recently witnessed the inauguration of King Makhosoke II of aManala for the Ndebele nation and King Mabhoko III of amaNdebele akaNdzundza, as part of implementing the pronouncements of the Nhlapho Commission on Claims and Disputes. During the Back-to-School campaign, I visited Magwagwaza and Magigwana Secondary Schools in Bushbuckridge and was inspired by the level of confidence demonstrated by the learners. I would like to join the Premier, Mr David Mabuza and members of the Provincial Cabinet by encouraging learners to remain focused in their studies. Government is doing everything possible to assist them, particularly in that area of the province which was continuously under-performing. I believe that the best weapon to defeat poverty is education.

On the same vein, I would like to congratulate the Class of 2010 for making the grade in the Matric examinations. We hope that you will take advantage of government's financial boost to the education and training sector, in which R14 million has been set aside for this purpose, as announced by Finance Minister, Dr Pravin Godhan. We also encourage those who did not pass, not to despair but to increase their work rate as they prepare to rewrite the examinations.

MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF THE HOD



HOD, MR MD MAHLOBO

The intervention of the Provincial Government in the municipalities, in which Section 139 of the Constitution was invoked, is yielding positive results. Lekwa Local Municipality in Standerton, is an example of a success story. The municipality has received a clean bill of financial health from the Auditor-General (A-G). It has received an unqualified report from the A-G after a disclaimer.

This instills public confidence in the proper use of the public purse by public institutions. This should further instill investor confidence and stimulate more economic activities. Of all the municipalities where the intervention took place, three of them have been lifted out of Administration, and they are: Mkhondo, Pixley Ka Isaiah Ka Seme and Thaba Chweu. They have achieved the imperatives of Operation Clean Audit 2014.

Despite these success stories, municipalities are still grappling with some challenges, such as capacity, retention of technical skills, such as engineers and financial management. Our department is working closely with them to help navigate these chal-

lenges. We have established a Rapid Response Unit, which consist of a team of experts. These experts are deployed to the municipalities to help them deal with the challenges and further unlock challenges that inhibit service delivery.

We have also partnered with the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) to train officials in the municipalities. In areas where financial management is still a challenge, we have helped them in the establishment of the Municipal Public Accounts Committee (MPAC) to strengthen oversight. We have also assisted them to establish internal audit committees. We believe that this will go a long way to put these challenges under control. In cases where allegations of maladministration have been received, we have acted without fear or favour. We have investigated such allegations and have referred some of them to the police.

With the growing number of the population in the urban areas of Mpumalanga, we have made a number of interventions to meet their demands on service delivery by improving the infrastructure. In the Govan Mbeki Municipality, for example, we have proudly revamped the dilapidated Bethal Power Station as a solution to the breakdown of the power supply.

The intervention has improved the functionality of the network in Bethal and Emzisoni and has upgraded the level of service for electricity supply. The project also contributed to the creation of job opportunities for the locals in line with President Jacob Zuma's call for job creation.

The decision by our Premier to establish a multi-disciplinary team that will address water challenges in the province, is commendable. As a department, we are happy that we were already well ahead in dealing with water challenges, by spearheading the construction of the Bloemendal- Delmas pipeline in Victor Khanye Local Municipality. The team will have something to build on, especially in the projects we have undertaken. We have put boreholes in a number of rural areas to bring water services closer to the communities.

As we approach the local government elections on 18 May 2011, the Premier, Mr David Mabuza has called on all of us to exercise our rights to vote without fear or intimidation. Let us all take heed of the call and vote in our numbers. The elections will usher in a new cadre of leadership that will take local government to another level. As a department we wish to thank the outgoing leadership for its diligence service. We have put training plans in place for the new leadership. Let us make Local Government Everybody's business.

PREMIER MABUZA DECLARES HOUSE OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS OPENED



IN THE HOUSE: Premier Mabuza and MEC Masuku share a moment with traditional leaders after the official opening of the House of Traditional Leaders in the Legislature.

The legislature building in the Riverside government complex, became a hive of activities during a special sitting to mark the official opening of the house of traditional leaders, by the Premier, Mr David Mabuza. The official sitting, was marked by fanfare at the Govan Mbeki Foyer, with Kings and members of the Traditional Councils making a grand entrance. Next to the red carpet, at the pavilion, leading to the entrance of the foyer, a traditional dance group, with a marimba beat, entertained guests before the start of the function. The arrival of Premier Mabuza, accompanied by the SAPS Brass Band and King Mabhoko III afterwards, became the montage of the sitting. For Premier Mabuza, this was the second time to declare the House of Traditional Leaders opened, while for King Mabhoko III, this was his first time to attend the sitting.

The House of Traditional Leaders (HTL) plays an oversight role on government's performance on issues related to the traditional institution. The government has committed itself to support it to play this role effectively. Last year, Premier Mabuza promised the HTL that vehicles will be purchased for Emakhosi to enable them to perform their duties. This year, the Premier announced the delivery of the vehicles, much to the excitement of the traditional leaders. "In line with providing this support it was important that we set up the necessary guidelines and frameworks that will guide the support that we will be providing. Cabinet has approved the Policy on Tools of Trade for Traditional Leaders. The Policy covers the provision of vehicles, furniture and Human Resource Support. I am pleased to announce that as part of the support we have bought 57 vehicles for traditional leaders. We will be handing them over to you immediately after the sitting," Mr Mabuza said.

As government steps up the fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS, traditional leaders have been identified as a key to the fight. Mr Mabuza appealed to the traditional leaders to mobilize people to participate in programmes aimed at reducing the disease. "We urge you to encourage people in areas of your jurisdiction to do voluntary

testing for them to know their status. We appeal to you to encourage males to do circumcision. By so doing, you will be helping us as we wage the war against HIV/AIDS," the Premier said. Mr Mabuza assured the HTL about government's commitment to improve its working relationship with Emakhosi. He added that this is important for the development and improvement of the economic status of areas in their jurisdiction. "I want to assure this gathering that the Mpumalanga Provincial Government remains committed to working with Traditional Leaders to strengthen the working relations on matters of governance. We also remain committed to working with Traditional Leaders to bring about development in rural areas. We will walk this journey together and indeed working together we can and we will do more," he added.

At the end of the sitting, Premier Mabuza and MEC for Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta), Mr Madala Masuku led the procession of traditional leaders to the Mbombela Stadium where they handed over the 57 vehicles purchased for them.



ROYAL PARLIAMENT: King Mlambo II of Mbuzini and Chief Makhosonkhe Dlamini of Embhuleni in Badplaas attended the official opening of the HTL in the Legislature.

MINISTER SHICEKA URGES KING MABHOKO TO DEVELOP HIS NATION



TRIBUTE: MEC Madala Masuku and Minister Shiceka pay homage to King Mabhoko III as they sing a traditional song for him.

The Minister of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta), Mr Sicelo Shiceka has appealed to King Mabhoko III to help develop his people. Mr Shiceka was addressing a function during a visit to the King in Kwamhlanga Government Legislature, as part of his Ministerial visit to Kings to discuss service delivery and governance.

Minister Shiceka urged the King to contribute to the improvement of people's lives and service delivery. "Your Majesty, we urge you to allow your nation to thrive. Please allow your nation to use the land to improve their lives. We need development in this area," Minister Shiceka said.

King Mabhoko III, is the King of the amaNdebele of the Ndzundza clan. He inherited the position from his late father, King Mayitjja as the rightful heir to the Mabhoko throne.

The Ministerial visit was also attended by MEC for Cogta, Mr Madala Masuku, the Chairperson of the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders, Ikosi Siph Mahlangu, the Chairperson of the Traditional Leadership, Dispute and Claims Commission, Mr Pitso Tolo, Emakhosi and government officials.

The visit came at the backdrop of government's commitment to provide emakhosi with the necessary resources to enable them to develop areas in their jurisdiction. MEC Masuku said government has come under heavy criticism of developing urban areas and neglect rural areas.

He says the situation is being turned around. "We have travelled a long way with municipalities playing their part in developing areas within their jurisdiction. However, as government, we are lambasted for being biased towards urban areas.

Rural development is amongst the top priorities in our agenda. We need Emakhosi as partners, to play their part. We are also aligning traditional institutions to ensure that they work better," said Mr Masuku.

Despite litigation that preceded the King's recognition, King Mabhoko appealed for peace and unity amongst his people. He linked the challenges he has traversed, like the Israelites, when crossing river Jordaen. He was referring to the opposition of his appointment, in which the matter was resolved through a court arbitration. "We have been fighting. It was a sweet fight. We have crossed river Jordaen. Now is the time to put the past behind us," King Mabhoko said.



HAIL THE KING: King Mabhoko III addresses his nation inside the Kwamhlanga Legislature.

LED HOSTS AUSTRALIAN STUDENTS



INFORMATIVE SESSION: Ehlanzeni District's Ms Nontobeko Mahlalela and LED's Ms Lidia Pretorius teach Australian students during their visit.

A group of post graduate geography students and lecturers from Monash University in Melbourne, Australia, recently visited Mpumalanga Province on a two week study tour. The twenty three students and three lecturers were accompanied by staff from the Monash University satellite campus in Roodepoort, Gauteng, Prof Jane Carruthers of UNISA and Mr Chris Williams, a land rights activist from Mpumalanga. The entourage visited land restitution and community projects, the Makhonjwa mountains and other tourist attractions in Ehlanzeni.

During the visit, the students interacted with Local Economic Development's Ms Lidia Pretorius and officials from the Department of Economic, Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism and Ehlanzeni District Municipality. Discussions centered around contextualising their impressions and discussions over the previous week with various communities, civic leaders and traditional leaders, predominantly within Bushbuckridge and Nkomazi within the legislative, planning and service delivery framework of government.

Topics such as powers and functions of the three spheres of government, cooperative governance, the evolving environment of local governance, spatial environment, integrated development planning,

local economic development, participatory governance, the role of traditional leadership in rural development, the Maputo Development Corridor, how policies translate into service delivery and development on the ground, among others, formed part of the agenda.

Particular focus also fell on the challenges facing the province in redressing the legacy of apartheid as it pertains to spatial planning,

building social cohesion and redressing under-development in the densely populated rural communities.

Although the students have been visiting Mpumalanga since 2002, however, it was for the first time that their visit included an interaction with government officials. At the end of the visit, the students described the interaction as knowledge enrichment, and applauded the LED Section. "This was a serious omission in the past, and that the interaction had provided us with a better understanding of the linkages between theory, policy and practice, and the challenges developing countries such as South Africa face in halving poverty and unemployment and achieving the other Millennium Development Goals," said the visitors afterwards.

A tour of the Mpumalanga Legislature and the Ehlanzeni District Municipality where they learnt more about the GIS and district spatial framework, also became the hall mark of the visit. Lidia says the visit also provided a valuable opportunity for Mpumalanga Province to explore further collaboration with Monash University in future.



SPELL BOUND: Australian students take keen interest of discussions during the visit.

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT FOCUSES ON STRENGTHENING MUNICIPALITIES IN 2011/12



COMMITMENT: Steve Tshwete's Executive Mayor, Cllr Manthlakeng Mahlangu signs a delivery agreement.

Strengthening the performance of municipalities and public participation is top on the priority list of the Government in Mpumalanga. This is the central message of Premier David Mabuza on local government in his State of the Province Address (SOPA) recently. The commitment by Premier Mabuza sends a strong signal that government is planning to tackle challenges that bedevil the proper functioning of municipalities head on. In his address, Mr Mabuza said the following interventions will be implemented to make municipalities to work better in the 2011/12 Financial year:

- Strengthening integrated planning and accelerated implementation
- Financial management
- Integrated municipal support through the enhancement and improvement of technical skills, planning, contract management, engineering, finance and project management
- The development of an action support programme for Municipalities for pre and post Local Government elections
- Building confidence in the local government system, including the deployment of financial resources in critical areas of need.

Last year, the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) organized a watershed Local Government lekgotla which took place in Secunda where Provincial Municipal Turn Around Strategy (MTAS) was developed and implemented. A ten point plan was also developed and implemented. In his speech, Mr Mabuza said: "We will continue to strengthen systems of public participation so that communities can participate meaningfully in development and service delivery programmes. We will continue to enhance the functioning of ward committees in order to mobilize local participation in matters of development and service delivery."

The five year term of the current local government leadership which started in 2006 is coming to an end, paving the way for a new leadership that will be ushered in after the Local Government elections scheduled for 18 May 2011. Mr Mabuza said although government acknowledges the problems faced by municipalities, however, in the main, the challenges are attended to. He said the main challenges stem from the reality that some municipalities are unsustainable because they have a low revenue base, and rely heavily on grants and external assistance. Despite the challenges, he commended some councilors and officials for working diligently. "In addition, the majority of our councilors have served our people with honesty and integrity. As the provincial government we commend and thank these diligent and true servants of the people. We also congratulate and acknowledge many municipalities that are fully functional and where Councilors and officials are doing their best to improve service delivery," the Premier said.

Executive Mayors have signed a delivery agreement in line with the government's outcome-based approach. Cogta continues to play a supporting role to the municipalities while the Premier's office continues to monitor and evaluate their performance.



DEAL: MEC Madala Masuku signs a Delivery agreement.

PREMIER HANDS OVER VEHICLES TO EMAKHOSI



INTERVENTION: Kgosigadi Mohlala receives keys for her vehicle from Premier David Mabuza at the Mbombela Stadium.

The Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) has fulfilled its commitment to purchase vehicles for Emakhosi in Mpumalanga. The commitment was made last year by Premier David Mabuza during the official opening of the House of Traditional Leaders in the legislature. This year, the Premier announced a plan for the hand over of the vehicles during the official opening of the house in the legislature. "We will continue to provide the necessary support to traditional leaders to enable them to perform their functions as expected. We have now concluded a policy on tools of trade for traditional leadership in the province. We are pleased to announce that as part of implementing the provisions of such policy, we have acquired the vehicles. Vehicles that you have been waiting for, for a long time, as you go home today, you will be driving new vehicles," said Mr Mabuza.

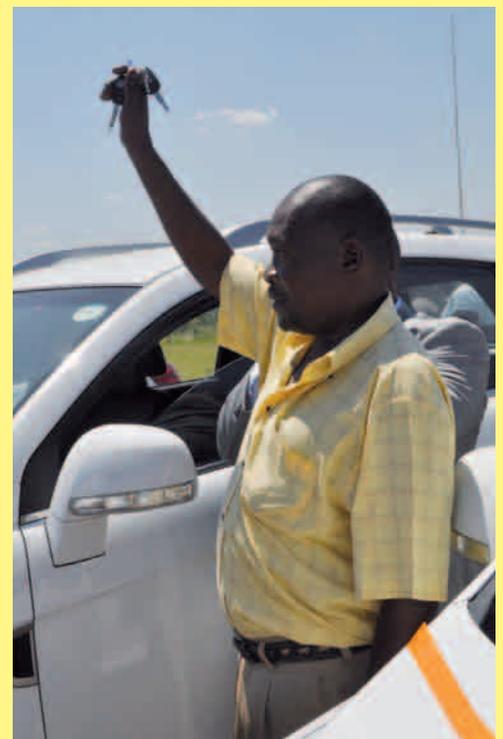
The announcement was met with a rapturous applause by traditional leaders, who were later given the vehicles at the Mbombela Stadium, by Premier David Mabuza, accompanied by MEC for Cogta, Mr Madala Masuku, the Speaker

of the Legislature, Mr William Lubisi and former MEC for Cogta, Mr Norman Mokoena. The function to hand over the vehicles was also attended by members of the Royal families and Traditional Councils, Head of Department, Mr David Mahlobo, Chairperson of the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders, Ikosi Siphohlahlanu.

During the hand over, Premier Mabuza appealed to traditional leaders to use the vehicles for amongst others, addressing the socio-economic issues facing their communities. Ikosi Siphohlahlanu was the first recipient of the vehicle followed by his Deputy, Kgosigadi Mohlala. Ikosi Mahlangu expressed gratitude to Premier Mabuza and Mr Masuku for the support. He also committed traditional leaders to use the vehicles to reach out to their communities in response to the Premier's call. "Mr Premier, we want to assure you that as Amakhosi, we would like to utilize the vehicles to mobilize our people in the fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS. As Amakhosi, we share the common vision in the fight against the spread of the disease," he said.

The purchase of the vehicles for Emak-

hosi follows the renovation of the Traditional offices last year by Cogta. The department has committed itself to renovate the remaining Traditional Councils during the 2011/12 financial year.



CELEBRATION: Chief Siboshwa Ngomane displays the keys of the vehicle during the function at the stadium.

COGTA In Action



GOING LIVE: Ligwalagwala FM's Presenter, Mr Bheki Nxumalo discusses disaster management issues with Water Affairs' Mr Fanyana Mntambo, Cogta's Mr Slykie Dhludhlu and Mr Sam Ngubane during a Current Affairs programme.



ON AIR: Ligwalagwala FM's technical team, Mr Frans Vilakazi and Ms Nomcebo Khulu monitors the digital desk for a smooth broadcast of the Current Affairs programme during the interview to discuss disaster management issues.



PARTNERSHIP: King Mabhoko III of the Nzunza clan and MEC Madala Masuku wait for the start of proceedings ahead of the Ministerial visit to the King in Kwamhlanga.



COMMUNICATION CHANNEL: Ehlanzeni District's Mr Lucky Ngomane and Mbombela Municipality's Mr Joseph Ngala share their views during a Communicators' workshop in Middleburg.



DANCING SKILLS: Cogta's Mr Mangisi Mnisi takes part in a traditional dance during a Ministerial visit to King Mabhoko III in Kwamhlanga.



SUPPORT: Cogta's Mr Bhubert Nkosi and Mr Abednigo Mkhathshwa marvel at proceedings during the CDWs function at Mzinti.



DELIVERY: Premier David Mabuza congratulates Chief Malaza of Mandlamakhulu Traditional Council as one of the recipients of the vehicles purchased by the government at the Mbombela Stadium



HONORARY: Emalahleni Executive Mayor, Cllr Lassy Nhlapo congratulate one of the Ward Committee members during a graduation ceremony at the Civic Theatre in Emalahleni.



INTRODUCTION: Cogta's Mr Isaac Chiloane outlines the purpose of a workshop on HIV/AIDS in Building 8. The workshop was organised by the Transversal Section to caution officials about the dangers of the disease.



DRESSED TO WORK: Mr Vusi Maseko, a Community Development Worker receives a jacket from the HOD Mr David Mahlobo during a Strategic meeting in White River, while Ms Hlanganani Nkosi looks on.



CULTURAL MIX: Chief Makhosonke Dlamini of Embhuleni welcomes King Makhosoke II of AmaNdebele during a traditional pilgrimage in Badplaas.



INFORMATIVE: MEC Madala Masuku talks to the SABC's Regional Editor, Mr Isaac Masemola in an interview about the state of municipalities in Mpumalanga.

EX-SPEAKER TAKES OVER THE REIGNS AS MAYOR IN MKHONDO MUNICIPALITY



NEW BEGINNING: Mkhondo Municipal Mayor, Cllr Philisiwe Langa delivers her inauguration speech in the Council Chamber. The Administrator, Mr Khaya Mpungose looks on.

The former Speaker of Mkhondo Local Municipality, Cllr Philisiwe Langa has been appointed as the new Executive Mayor. Her appointment comes at the time when the municipality has gained stability following service delivery protests by the local communities last year. The protests caused the Provincial Executive to place the municipality under Administration, in line with Section 139 (1) (b) of the Constitution.

The communities in the Mkhondo Municipality have an array of service delivery challenges which the Mayor and the new Mayoral Committee have to overcome. The infrastructure such as roads, need an urgent intervention. The potholes in the seat of the municipality, Piet Retief, featured prominently in the Mayor's inaugural speech. This is a sign that the Mayor is ready to deal with the challenges head on. "We will ensure that the potholes that have become a feature of our towns are closed. The overall state of our roads will be given more attention. The supply of water and provision of sanitation services will also be on our radar screen," Cllr Langa said.

The Mkhondo Municipality was amongst the five municipalities in Mpumalanga to be placed under Administration. During that period, a number of officials and councilors were either dismissed or resigned, when investigations were carried out on allegations of corruption and maladministration.

This exercise was hailed by the Executive Mayor as a sign of commitment towards clean governance. "Within this vein, we

also cannot help but observe the fact that the intervention assisted in bringing about stability and in investigating and prosecuting various wrongdoers in management and in Council, hence a significant number of our Councillors and managers were either dismissed or resigned under a cloud. What a clear commitment to clean government by the ANC-led government!," she commended. As the plan to build a fully-fledged University for Mpumalanga gets underway, the Mkhondo Municipality is also gearing itself to reap the fruits of the construction. The Mayor says the municipality is an ideal place for part of the plan. "It is our resolve that we will seek to attract and retain the best skills and talents that will advance Mkhondo Municipality. In so doing, we will also seek ways and means of identifying and nurturing our own home-grown talent. Such projects as the establishment of an Agriculture and Forestry Campus of the proposed University of Mpumalanga and the establishment of a bio-diesel plant within Mkhondo Municipality will be high on our agenda, as we vigorously campaign and lobby for them to come to our municipality," she said.

In line with succession, Cllr Langa's predecessors are Cllr Mary Khumalo and Cllr Andries Gamede who is the current Mayor of the Gert Sibande District. As the municipality opens a new chapter, the new Mayor also credited the Administrator, Mr Khaya Mpungose and the team of officials from the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs for playing a pivotal role in putting systems in place as part of a strategy to turn the municipality around.

STORM WREAK HAVOC IN DUNDONALD



DEVASTATION: The Syde Primary School was left with no roof top when a tornado ravaged Dundonald.

Local residents of Dundonald in the Albert Luthuli Local Municipality bore the brunt of a storm which left a trail of devastation. Several families were left homeless as the storm blew away roof tops of their houses. The affected families had to salvage what was left as their furniture and other belongings were also blown away. Domestic animals became casualties. Several goats, chicken and dogs were found dead while others sustained injuries. Electricity poles were swept away due to the persistent rain, leaving residents without power. Trees were uprooted.

Dundonald is amongst the five locations affected by the storm in the Albert Luthuli Municipality. Three schools, namely: Syde Primary School, Umhlangazane Secondary School and Vygeboom Combined School were badly damaged. Two people lost their lives in separate incidents. Other areas in which the storm caused damage are: Sandleni, Schoeman, Diepdale and Fernie, leaving ninety-seven households without shelter. The Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) teamed up with the Albert Luthuli Municipality to provide support for the affected families after paying a visit to assess the extent of the damage. The families were provided with tents.

Elsewhere in the Nkangala District, the R55 bridge which link Witbank and Middleburg suffered major defects, posing a huge risk to use it. Traffic was diverted to the N4 toll road, to prevent any potential danger.

In his state of the Nation address, President Jacob Zuma announced a relief aid by government to assist communities struck by disasters. He told the nation: "As we prepare for elections, we also note that our country has been struck by devastating floods in recent weeks, and many families have been affected.

Let me use this opportunity to announce that Government has set aside R800 million for immediate relief to assist communities." President Zuma further extended condolences to the families of those who lost their lives and commended relief agencies, non-governmental organisations, private sector, religious organisations and communities for assisting those in need.

The Department appeals to communities to report any disaster in their area by phoning the following Disaster Toll Free number: **0800 202 507**



POWERLESS: Residents were left without power when electricity poles were swept away by the storm.

CDWs TRAINED TO SERVE THE PEOPLE



HONORARY: *eMalahleni Executive Mayor, Cllr Lesley Nhlapho confirms Ms Mapule Maseko as a Community Development Worker during a graduation ceremony at the Civic Theatre*

The Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs' efforts to ensure that every ward has a Community Development Workers (CDWs) have been realized when 95 of them attended a graduation function at the eMalahleni Civic Theatre. The ceremony was attended by Executive Mayors, representatives of the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA), Councillors, Ward Committee members, officials from Municipalities and various government departments.

Addressing the function, the Executive Director for Amachawe FET College, Dr William Ndlala urged the graduates to take advantage of the learning opportunities that government is providing. "Skills development, capacity building and community leadership are important for CDWs as it will enable them to serve their communities well," Dr Ndlala said.

The graduation of the 95 graduates will see the number of CDWs increasing to 399 in Mpumalanga. The CDW programme was initiated by government in 2003 and it has grown from strength to strength and its key focus is to bring government closer to the people. As the foot soldiers of government and service delivery agents, the role of CDWs is to make sure that people, especially the marginalized, the aged and rurally-based people have access to services.

Speaking on behalf of MEC for Corporate Governance and Traditional Affairs, Mr Madala Masuku, the Executive Mayor of eMalahleni Local Municipality, Cllr Lesley Nhlapho said through the CDW programme, government has been able to give true meaning to President Jacob Zuma's statement when he delivered the 2010 State of the Nation Address. "President Zuma said that the defining feature of this administration will be that it knows

where the people live, understands their needs and responds faster, adding that government must work faster, harder and smarter," he said. Cllr Nhlapho added that we need to do an introspection and ask ourselves how far we have gone towards improving service delivery for the people, facilitating community development and working towards sustainable economic and social upliftment.

He further hinted that today many of our most marginalized people have had their stories told and an improvement brought to their lives, which would not have been possible without the CDW programme. "Today many of our grandmothers, grandfathers orphans and disabled are able to access social grants irrespective of where they are, many of those who need health services are able to access them through Home Based Care or Mobile Clinics and many more have been able to get houses and other services," Cllr Nhlapho said.

CDWs are expected to perform their duties with passion about community development. They are also expected to know people better and their circumstances and deepen insight into people's needs and resource and have good interpersonal skills so that they interact easily with them based on their cultural backgrounds.



CATALYSTS OF CHANGE: *A group of Community Development Workers attended the graduation ceremony at eMalahleni's Civic Theatre.*

GOVERNMENT COMMITTED TO ENSURE SUCCESSFUL ELECTIONS

Preparations are well underway for the coming local government elections, scheduled for 18 May 2011. The elections will mark the end of the five year term of the current local government leadership which started in 2006. However sporadic service delivery protests have characterised municipalities during the past two years. This has prompted the government to introduce a turn around strategy known as Municipal Turn Around Strategies to address the sources of those challenges.

President Jacob Zuma had this to say during the State of the Nation address in February 2011 about local government system: "There have been lots of complaints over the past few months about local government. The frustrations in some areas resulted in protests which indicated the problems that existed in this sphere. We have to make people's experience of local government a pleasant one, as it touches their homes and their lives directly, every day".

Since the election date was declared, the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) has been hard at work mobilizing potential voters to register and to cast their ballots. Mpumalanga Premier, Mr David Mabuza has joined the fray by appealing to voters to vote. "We need to ensure that the challenges of service delivery are addressed in a systematic, more determined and transparent manner at all times working to involve communities in resolving problems and overcoming whatever obstacles that may exist. We have the power and means to make local government work better," Mr Mabuza said during the State of the Province address.

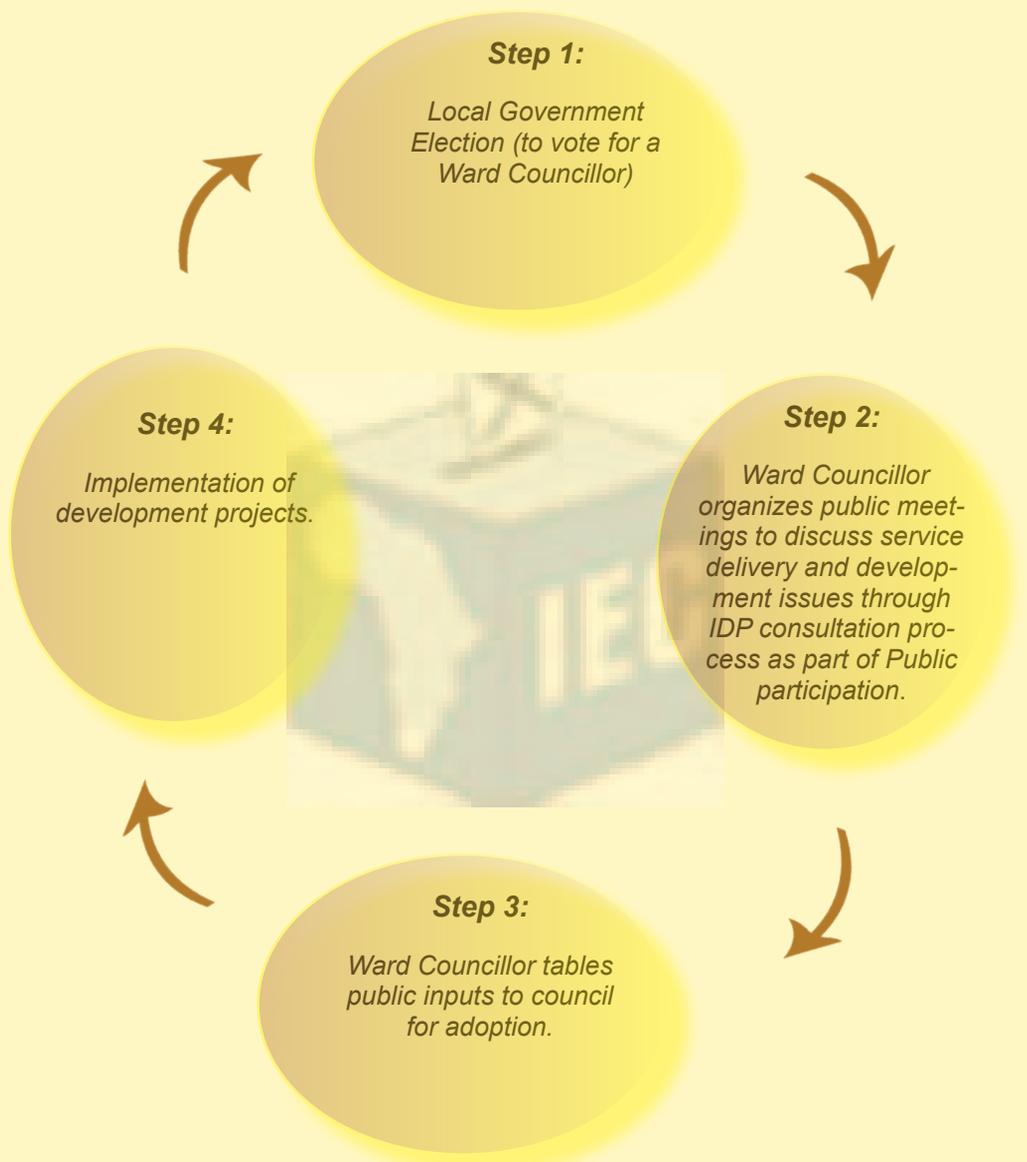
The success of the elections also hinges on government's support. In Mpumalanga, the department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) is working closely with sector departments,

such as Home Affairs, Public Works, Roads and Transport, Safety, Security and Community Liaison and Department of Water Affairs to ensure the success of the elections, based on its mandate as 'the single window of co-ordination. Cogta's officials, Community Development Workers (CDWs), whose number has increased to 399 have a bigger role to play, chief amongst them, to assist people without IDs to obtain them from the Home Affairs. CDWs are also expected to assist the Home Affairs by identifying owners of ID documents that lie in their hundreds uncollected, and distribute them.

Cogta is home to Home Affairs offices in the 14 Thusong Service Centres (TSCs) managed by Cogta.

The two departments signed a service level agreement which gave rise to a working relationship between the two departments. As the momentum for the elections grow, the relationship is key as Cogta has to create a conducive environment for Home Affairs to provide the service.

Generally, local government elections in South Africa do not enjoy popular support compared to the national elections, despite their importance. Experts say local government is important as it is the first institution that people have contact with on issues of service delivery. The elections give the voter the power to have a say on governance issues that have a directive impact over their lives. (See illustration below).



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VISION

Intergrated sustainable people
centred development

MISSION

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

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