

Local News

Second Quarter 2009/10

July - Sep 2009

Issue No: 2



cgta

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



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER



Ministerial Task team on Service delivery

Performance of Municipalities & Amakhosi tops list of budget priorities

Department Intervenes in the Mkhondo Municipality Saga

Chief Mlambo II Tables Application for Kingship Status

Mandela's 67 Minutes

Department brings services closer to Rural Residents

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EDITORIAL *Comment*

We welcome our newly appointed Head of Department, Mr David Mahlobo, who assumed his duties in September 2009. Mr Mahlobo takes over from Mr Sam Ngubane, who steered the department after the split of the erstwhile Department of Local Government and Housing. In his capacity as Acting Head of Department, Mr Ngubane managed to help the department to deal with challenges of filling critical posts, managing the process of splitting the budget and the assets of the newly created department and issues related to service delivery. He was also hands on when the department was grappling with the shortage of office space, which resulted in the department securing space outside the Government complex precinct to accommodate some sections of the department. Mr Mahlobo has been working in the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) before joining our department.

We wish Mr Mahlobo a successful period as the Head of the Department. We commit ourselves to give him our undivided support and commitment. We also thank Mr Ngubane for his sterling leadership role during his stint as the Acting Head of Department. Apart from the many achievements he has recorded, Mr Ngubane hands over a department with an unqualified report from the Auditor-General, a daunting task which he achieved through the support of officials at all levels.



INTRODUCTION: MEC Norman Mokoena welcomes the new HOD, Mr David Mahlobo. Mr Dumisani Shipalana (CFO) and Mr Sam Ngubane (Chief Director: Development and Planning) look on

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MEC's FOREWORD



MEC Norman Mokoena

The Ministerial Task Teams that were dispatched to the province in August 2009 to investigate the backlogs facing municipalities which could have led to the service delivery protest have finalised their work and submitted a comprehensive report on the state of Local Government. The report has indicated a number of findings which include the following:

- Lack of responsiveness to issues raised by communities.
- In most municipalities the relationship between the Mayor, Speaker, the Chief Whip and the Municipal Manager is strained.
- In effective public participation and communication through ward committees and community development workers (CDW's).
- Financial mismanagement and allegations of fraud and corruption.
- High vacancy rate in most municipalities
- Poor planning, maintenance and management of infrastructure resulting in poor service delivery.

A bird's eye view of the status of our municipalities and in particular some of the findings of the task team indicate that there are problems at this sphere of government. We are in the process of formulating remedial action that will address these challenges. Key amongst these will be to re-engineer the functionality and effectiveness of our public participation fora. We need to ensure that we vigorously engage

communities and that they also have the channels to give us feedback on matters affecting them.

Now that the task teams have completed their work we will be assisting all districts to present the findings to all municipalities. We will then rollout immediate and long term interventions to support and strengthen municipalities.

I must commend the Minister of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs the Honourable Sicelo Shiceka for setting up these Ministerial Task Teams. I must also commend the officials from the National and Provincial Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, South African Local Government Association (Mpumalanga), Organised Labour at Local Government, for their dedication and commitment during the visits to municipalities.

We have set a number of targets as government which will assist to improve the performance of our municipalities. These targets include:

- By 2011 Ward Committees should be given the necessary powers and resources to develop and implement a ward development plan.
- By 2011 fraud and corruption in municipalities is reduced to a minimum.
- By 2010 complaints by people regarding local government are reduced significantly.

- By 2014 all municipalities will have achieved clean audits on their financial statements.

We can only achieve all the above if we adhere to the spirit of co-operative governance and we work together.

Recently President Jacob Zuma launched the Comprehensive Rural Development Strategy in Giyani, Limpopo Province. The launch catapults us into more action for the success of the strategy. Our department is responsible for co-ordination of the establishment of Land Committees, which are crucial for the success of the strategy.

As stated in the Department's Policy and Budget Speech for 09/10, we will be putting emphasis on strengthening the institution of Traditional Leadership. Part of these initiatives will include the renovation of 10 offices for Traditional Authorities.

We will also be rolling out some capacity building programmes for our Traditional Leaders. We are committed to ensuring that by the end of the current administrator's term, we will have been able to turn our Institutions of Traditional Leadership into service delivery vehicles.

The continued upsurge in service delivery protest in the province is a matter of concern for us as government. We must reiterate that whilst we acknowledge the right for people to protest, this should be done within the ambit of the law, and we will not tolerate the acts of violence, intimidation, disregard for the rule of law and the destruction of property that accompany these protests.

As government we remain committed to solving all problems faced by our communities, but this must be done through dialogue and working together.

As we continue doing our work and improving the functioning of government, we must all play our part and work together. I would also like to welcome our new Head of Department, Mr David Mahlobo and wish him well during his tenure. In the same vein I must thank Mr Sam Ngubane, for the sterling work he has done in leading the department as the Acting Head of Department.



MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF THE HOD



HOD, Mr David Mahlobo

I take over the reigns of the Department, when we have just submitted our annual financial report for 2009/10 and we have received a clean bill of health from the Auditor General. I must appreciate the good work that has been done by Mr Sam Ngubane who led the department in an acting capacity, and the entire management and staff of the department. Indeed the foundation has been laid and mine is to continue building.

Our Department has been given a new mandate of co-ordinating and promoting synergy vertically and horizontally across all the three spheres of government. We are now the centre of all government business.

This means an end to the old habit and entrenched system of working in silos, yet we are all servicing the same people. We must deal with the issues that have hampered our system of co-operative governance, putting more emphasis on the areas of planning and performance monitoring.

As MEC Norman Mokoena, tabled the 2009/10 policy and budget speech for the department he clearly outlined and gave us our marching orders. Honour-

able MEC, we have heard you and we will ensure that we fulfil the mandate.

Most of our municipalities have recently experienced a surge of unrests. These unrests have indicated some gaps in our system of local government. The department has set up teams in each of the districts and they will be providing specific interventions and support. We are confident that we will deal with these issues and bring stability to local government.

We are in the middle of global economic recession. This requires all of us to tighten our economic belts and use all the resources very prudently. Whilst we are faced with the economic recession, we must be cognisant that our communities expect nothing less than service delivery and we cannot afford to make any excuses.

In an effort to meet the expectations placed on us and the requirements of our new mandate, we will be reviewing our institutional arrangement to strengthen our capacity. This will definitely require the reorganisation of our organogram and the upgrading of certain posts. Key amongst these interventions will be the introduction of

a unit that will focus solely on Performance, Monitoring and Support of municipalities.

We will also continue to call on our social partners such as the Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA) the Institute of Civil Engineering in South Africa, the Council for Chartered Accountants and GTZ to assist build capacity within the Department and in our municipalities.

The recent reconfiguration of the “Flagships” by the Executive Council has led to the transfer and migration of the water services function to the Department of Human Settlements. This will enable the department of Human Settlements to build settlements with running water and proper sanitation. This therefore means that the “Water for All” flagship will migrate to the department of Human Settlements.

As I take over the baton I commit myself to working with all our staff members and stakeholders of the department. I know that I can count on the support of all of you and I can assure you the next three years will be very exciting.

MINISTERIAL TASK TEAM ON SERVICE DELIVERY

The Task Teams dispatched to the 21 municipalities in Mpumalanga by Minister of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Mr Sicelo Shiceka have compiled reports regarding their findings. The teams were established to investigate the problems facing local municipalities which could have contributed to the upsurge in service delivery protests in the Province. The reports were presented to Minister Shiceka, Premier David Mabuza and MEC Norman Mokoena.

A preliminary report regarding the protests revealed the following:

- Lack of responsiveness to issues raised by communities.
- Tensions between the political and administrative sections of the municipalities.

- Ward committees that are not fully functional, resulting in poor communication with communities.
- Financial mismanagement and allegations of fraud and corruption.
- Poor planning, maintenance and management of infrastructure resulting in poor service delivery.
- IDP and budgeting processes not aligned in some municipalities.

The preliminary investigations focused on Thaba Chweu, Albert Luthuli, eMalahleni, eMkhondo, Pixley ka Seme, Govan Mbeki, Steve Tshwete and Msukaligwa, some of whom have experienced the most violent protests.

At the height of the protests, foreign nationals were also targeted in Balfour, in the Dipaleseng Municipality. MEC Mokoena condemned the acts

of violence, intimidation, destruction of property and criminality that have marked the protests in the Province. He urged Security agencies to act against the perpetrators. Minister Shiceka said the attacks on foreign nationals in these protests are an act of criminality which will not be tolerated, especially in a country where preparations for the 2010 FIFA World Cup are underway. "Such acts further take away from any genuine grievances that anyone may be presenting to government," Minister Shiceka said. The National Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs is planning a summit of all Ward Committees to deal with the critical issues of public participation and communication. The national summit will be held in October 2009 and in November 2009, the department will convene a local government summit.



SOLUTIONS: MEC Norman Mokoena and Minister Shiceka address the media. Chief Director: Development and Planning Mr Sam Ngubane and Head of Communications, Mr Simphiwe Kunene

PERFORMANCE OF MUNICIPALITIES & AMAKHOSI TOPS LIST OF BUDGET PRIORITY



ENTOURAGE: Senior officials of the Department exchange greetings with MEC Mokoena before the tabling of the Policy and Budget Speech in the Legislature.

An audience of Executive Mayors, Members of the Legislature, Amakhosi, Senior government officials and stakeholders of the department, gave the MEC for Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Mr Norman Mokoena a standing ovation when he tabled the department's Policy and Budget speech for the 2009/10 financial year. Mr Mokoena says about R415 million has been budgeted for the department. Part of the amount, will be utilized for the following:

- Conduct Skills Audit to all Municipal officials
- Conduct training of Municipal Managers on change and financial management
- Facilitate training of municipal creditors and debtors on financial management
- Facilitate learnerships on IDP
- Training of Councilors on Municipal Leadership Development
- Training of Traditional Leaders on Policy Development and LED.

These interventions come in the wake of the recent outbreak of protests in various municipalities in which local communities complained about poor service, amongst other issues. The interventions are also expected to help municipalities to deal with problems identified as factors that triggered the unrests. The factors include the following:

- Lack of responsiveness to issues raised by communities.
- Tensions between the political and administrative sections of the municipalities.
- Ward committees that are not fully functional, resulting in poor communication with communities.
- Financial management and allegations of fraud and corruption.

- Poor planning, maintenance and management of infrastructure resulting in poor service delivery.
- IDP and budgeting processes not aligned in some municipalities.

Few municipalities in Mpumalanga and in other provinces have in the past managed to receive a clean bill of health from the Auditor-General. However the situation is likely to change if the plan to improve the situation is anything to go by. MEC Mokoena says: "There is also concern about the number of disclaimers and adverse audit opinions issued by the Auditor General. The Department has embarked on operation clean audit 2014. Through this intervention the Department plans to have all municipalities receiving clean audit opinions by 2014. This will be done in conjunction with the National Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs."

Municipalities also got a shot in the arm when MEC Mokoena announced a total amount of R2, 995 billion over the MTEF period which will be provided through the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG), of which R2, 91 billion has been committed to projects identified by municipalities. He added: "In this financial year 2009/10, a total of R839 million has been allocated to our municipalities towards assisting in eradicating the basic services backlogs". With an amount of R1,6 billion being owed by government departments to local municipalities, the commitment by MEC Mokoena to help municipalities recover it, could not have come at a better time.

Following the moving of the House of Traditional Leadership to the Department, MEC Mokoena says Traditional Leaders will now be accorded their status in soci-

ety. He emphasized Traditional Leaders will now be given the due recognition and they will play their part in matters of governance. "I assure Amakhosi that they will never again be treated as step children," said Mr Mokoena. He further added that the department will roll-out capacity building programmes for Traditional Leaders in the following areas:

- Integrated Development Programmes (IDPs).
- Local Economic Development (LED).
- Land Use Management Plans.
- Municipal Property Rates Act.
- Inter-Governmental Relations Framework Act (IGR).

Part of the budget will also be utilized to provide Traditional Leaders with the necessary resources to perform their duties. Says Mr Mokoena: "The department has set up a task team that includes the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders, and State Law advisors to look into the matter. This team is amongst others looking at issues relating to the procurement of vehicles to be used by Traditional Leaders and their Councils for official purposes, provision of office accommodation and or renovation of offices for Traditional Leaders and Traditional Councils, procurement of furniture and related office equipment for Traditional Leaders and Traditional councils, the provision of an operational budget within the department and payment of all monies to sustain the functional requirements of Traditional Leaders and Traditional Councils."



Department



WORKER'S FORUM: Officials of the department attend a NEHAWU meeting.



ROLL-OUT PLAN: Albert Luthuli Executive Mayor Cllr Sinana Dhlamini and MEC, Mr Norman Mokoena paint a creche at Ekulindeni.



LEADING THE PACK: Premier David Mabuza is flanked by Ikosi Sipho Mahlangu (left) and Kgosikgadi Mohlala during the opening of the House of Traditional Leaders.



FEEDBACK: Mr John Simelane of the Department, and Chief Nkosi of Ka-Daantjie listen to a presentation by Ms Bongli Mtsweni about non-payment of rates in rural areas.



LOCALIZATION: Department's Mr Jabulani Mayindi shakes hands with Dr Thomas Mogale of Wits University and Mr Mefika Matsebula of GTZ



MADIBA'S TREASURE: Department's Mr Thinta Ndzimande donates packages of delicacies to local children at Ekulindeni during the Madiba Day celebrations.



nt in Action



LEARNING POINT: The 2009 Class of the LED Course



ACCORD: MEC Mokoena, flanked by Gert Sibande District's Mayor, Cllr Andries Gamede and Govan Mbeki's Mayor, Cllr Siphon Nkosi sign an MOU in Nelspruit.



MEDIA TALK: SABC's Bheki Nxumalo talks to Mr Oupa Pilane during a radio interview.



HISTORICAL CONNECTION: Head of Thusong Service Centers in the department, Mr Sifiso Nxumalo shares information about TSC centers



HINTS: Officials of the department take notes during a cancer awareness campaign.



PARTNERSHIPS: Chief Director: Development and Planning Mr Sam Ngubane engages stakeholders during the budget speech day in the Legislature.



CGTA TRAINS WARD COMMITTEES

A prognosis of a preliminary report about the recent service delivery protests in Mpumalanga highlighted the non-functionality of Ward Committees as one of the contributing factors. The report was compiled after an outbreak of sporadic protests in Mkhondo, Dipaleseng and Thaba Chewu local Municipalities. According to the preliminary report, Ward Committees are not fully functional, resulting in poor communication and public participation.

In terms of the Municipal Structures' Act of 2000, a Ward Committee must consist of not more than 10 people. A local Councillor, representing that Ward in the Council, becomes Chairperson of the Ward Committee. The election of the members must take into account the following:

- Equitable representation of women;
- Diversity of interests;
- Frequency of meetings to be held;
- Circumstances under which these members must vacate office.

Ward Committees are expected to play the following roles, as stipulated in the Municipal Structures' Act of 2000:

- In the preparation, implementation and review of IDPs
- In the establishment, implementation and review of PMS
- The monitoring and review of municipality's performance, in all areas of its key activities/programs
- The preparation of budget
- Provision of municipal services
- Promotion of LED
- Encourage residents to settle their municipal service accounts regularly
- Receive and refer complaints/concerns from the public to council for necessary attention and to report back.

The department has organized training for Ward Committees as an intervention to revive their effectiveness. Ward Committee members in the 21 municipalities attended the intensive training which lasted for five days. They were trained in the following areas:

- Municipal core processes;
- Service delivery issues.
- IDP and Budget processes.
- Importance of meetings.

The Speakers' office at municipal level is responsible for Ward Committees. As part of the support mechanism for Ward Committees, the department will assist municipalities in supporting and monitoring their performance, following the training.

The speakers offices of all Municipalities are responsible for Ward Committees. Community members can contact their local municipalities to get details about their Ward Committees



FACILITATION: Organizers of the Ward Committee training share a lighter moment at the end of a session in Middleburg.



FOCUS: Members of the ward committees pay attention to lessons



EXCHANGE: A ward committee member shares information with a trainer in Graskop.



INVESTIGATORS SUBMIT PRELIMINARY REPORT ON MKHONDO MUNICIPALITY

Financial mismanagement, fleet management and breach of the employment procedures are some of the findings contained in the preliminary report on Mkhondo Local Municipality. Investigations in the municipality were carried out following the appointment of a team of investigators by the Mpumalanga Provincial Government, in terms of Section 106 (1)(b) of the Local Government Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No.32 of 2000), to investigate allegations of maladministration, fraud, corruption, nepotism, poor service delivery, poor implementation of the IDP and lack of proper consultation in terms of resource distribution and infrastructure made against the local municipality.

The report reveals discrepancies in the financial management of the municipality. It also uncovered the following:

- Moneys allocated to projects, have been mismanaged;
- Some officials have been paid unduly;
- Some officials and councilors have misused municipal credit cards;
- Lack of proper monitoring and accountability on municipal vehicles;
- Misuse of fleet vehicles;
- Some individuals have been employed illegally;

The report recommends that money paid unduly to officials must be recouped and that the officials should face a disciplinary hearing. In cases where officials have been implicated in the misuse of credit cards and breach of employment procedures, those officials should also face disciplinary hearings.

When the Provincial Government took the decision to put Mkhondo Municipality under Administration earlier this year, Mr Misabeni Khosa was appointed for six months with a mandate to develop a recovery plan for the municipality. His appointment followed a spate of service delivery protests by the local community.

In September 2009, the Administrator was given four months to conclude outstanding matters related to the investigations. By then, he was in the process of setting up a policy on the use of council credit cards. He had already started putting systems in place to minimize the abuse of council resources.

Mpumalanga Premier, Mr David Mabuza and MEC for Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Mr Norman Mokoena have met the local community and other stakeholders to brief them about progress in the municipality, since the appointment of the Administrator.

LET'S ALL SAY NO TO VIOLENCE



TOUGH TALK: MEC Norman Mokoena reprimands local residents against vandalism at Thandukukhanya Stadium.



SUPPORT: Mr Misabeni Khosa has been appointed as the Administrator for Mkhondo Local Municipality



CHIEF MLAMBO II TABLES APPLICATION FOR KINGSHIP STATUS

Chief Mlambo II may in future be accorded the Kingship status if his application to the Commission for Traditional Leadership Disputes and Claims becomes successful. Currently, Mlambo is accorded the status of Chieftancy, which he disputes. During a submission to the Commission at the Parks Board offices, King Mlambo's representative, Mr Fish Mahlalela told the commission that the Mlambo Authority's existence dates back to the 16th century. "Unfortunately, we can only relate our medieval existence orally, because as you know our history as blacks was never written. So we too can only relate what we have been reliably told," Mr Mahlalela told the commission.

The Commission, was established in 2005 by former President Thabo Mbeki to resolve disputes related to Kingships and Queenships, tribal boundaries and applications for Kingship status and its first sitting was in Mpumalanga, in the former KwaNdebele during the contestation of the late King Mayitha's Chieftancy. In the Mlambo application, the Commission was told that the Mlambo tribe cuts across the three countries, i.e South Africa, Mozambique and Swaziland. "If you go to Swaziland, we have a Chief who pays allegiance to King Mlambo here, and he himself was installed by our King. In Mozambique, we also have a Chief who is recognized by the Mozambican government. In South Africa, the Mlambo tribe extends to areas that border the far East of Nkomazi, towards

Swaziland and Mozambique, with its Head office at Mbuzini. Probed by the Commission about whether one of the erstwhile leaders of the tribe was one of the late King Mswati II's Generals of the army during World War II, Mr Mahlalela disputed it by saying: "In fact during the World war II, one of our fore fathers led the Mlambo regiment, side-by side with King Mswati's army. The two complimented each other during the war. Its conquest was celebrated by killing two cows." He repeatedly told the Commission that the application for the Kingship status should not be misconstrued as an application to contest the Swazi Kingdom or the rulership of the Swazi nation. The commission is expected to study the application and evidence submitted, before a decision can be pronounced.



HISTORICAL CONNECTION: Mr Fish Mahlalela checks his documents as Chief Mlambo supports him.

Department Launches LED Training

35 students have enrolled for the second Local Economic Development (LED) Course initiated by the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CGTA). The course consists of 7 Modules, and students will be evaluated on the basis of group assignments, class attendance on a monthly basis and competency. Once completed, graduates will be awarded an NQ F Level 7 qualification, which is at the level of an Honours degree.

Manager for LED, Mr Jabulani Mayindi says the course will help equip students with the necessary expertise to develop LED strategies. Students include officials from CGTA and the Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (EDET) and municipalities. Last year, a similar course was initiated by the department in conjunction with Wits University and

a German NGO, GTZ. This year, the partnership between the department and the two institutions has been strengthened. "As a department we will subject graduates to a plan where they have to explain and commit themselves about what they will do. We will also be monitoring them and assess them from time to time to make sure that they put into practice what they have learnt", says Mr Mayindi. Wits University's Dr Thomas Mogale says the course will help build an understanding about LED especially for officials working in the Local Government environment. "Through this course LED practitioners are able to create a framework which will guide them to make LED a reality. It will help them to implement it," says Dr Mogale. The course will be completed in December 2009.





EMULATING MADIBA: The Madiba celebration was also set aside for the distribution of food parcels to the poor in Ekulindeni.

DEPARTMENT SPENDS 67 MINUTES FOR MADIBA

In his address, MEC Mokoena told the local community of Ekulindeni that the Mandela Day should be a reminder for us all about what Mandela stood for. “Mandela stood for strong values such as Human Rights, Ubuntu, Reconciliation and improvement of the quality of life. As a department we have committed ourselves to support these values by bringing the function for 67 minutes here,” Mr Mokoena said. He added: “Mandela spent 27 years in prison. When he was released, he had an option of revenging against his nemesis. He had the power at his disposal, to revenge. As a President, he could use the police force and the soldiers to fight back. But instead, he preached reconciliation.”

The 67 minutes function brought services closer to the community of Ekulindeni. In line with the chain reaction of services, Home Affairs was on site to provide people with IDs and Birth Certificates, while police officers provided applicants with affidavits. Photos were also taken on the spot. A Mobile clinic with nurses from the Department of Health attended to the sick, while distributing condoms and brochures with health hints. An entourage led by MEC Mokoena dirtied its hands by painting the local Siyakhula Creche. A large cake which bore the picture of the Nobel Peace Prize laureate and the South African flag was cut and shared with the community in celebration of Madiba’s 91 years.



MADIBA CAKE: MEC Norman Mokoena leads an entourage of Mayors to the cutting of the cake at Ekulindeni community hall

TOGETHER WE CAN DO MORE



DEPARTMENT BRINGS SERVICES CLOSE TO RURAL RESIDENTS



SERVICE POINT: MEC Mokoena unveils a plaque at the center to mark its official opening. Chief Mlambo (traditional gear) and Nkomazi Mayor, Mr Mavuso provide support.

The Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs has breathed life to the idea of Rural Development Programme. The idea was introduced by President Jacob Zuma in his State of the Nation address with the view of improving the lives of people in the rural areas by bringing services close to their proximity and reviving the local economy. In its bid to make the idea a reality, MEC Norman Mokoena officially opened the Mbongwane Thusong Service Center (TSC), to mark the beginning of access to government services for the locals and neighbouring poor villages. Fourteen TSCs have already been established in Mpumalanga, making it the leading province with well established TSCs. GCIS Regional Director, Mr Tiisetso Ramotse says Mpumalanga serves as a source of reference for other provinces yet to establish fully functional TSCs. The Mbongwane TSC boasts with offices for Home Affairs, Social Security Agency (SSA), a Computer School and an ATM.

The center became a hive of activity when MEC Mokoena led an entourage of Senior officials, the Acting HOD, Mr Sam Ngunane, Nkomazi Mayor, Cllr John Mavuso, Chief Mlambo and the Center Manager, Mr Mike Mabuza toured service points. During the tour, MEC Mokoena encouraged learners at the computer school to make use of the opportunity to learn more about computers. He jokingly requested them to invite him on the day of graduation to see if they have all passed.

The long distance travelling of residents to apply for IDs, Birth Certificates, Death Certificates, Marriage Certificates and Social grants has been brought to an end. This was marked by the unveiling of the plaque by MEC Mokoena, assisted by Chief Mlambo II and Mayor Mavuso. Residents in the following villages are expected to benefit from the Mbongwane TSC:

Mbuzini, Tsambokhulu, Mananga, Masibekela, Mthatha, New Village, Mdzabu, Khomba-so Goba and Hhoyi.

In his address, MEC Mokoena urged the residents to use the center as a basis for the improvement of their lives. "We want to see the aged being paid pension money. Those with physical disabilities must be paid their money. This can only happen if you apply for the necessary documentation in this center. If you have no ID, you should apply for it here. You must use the center to improve your lives," he said. The center is the latest government facility to be built at Mbongwane. A new Police Station was recently built to fight crime in the area. MEC Mokoena says the opening of the center serves as a sign that more services will be brought to rural areas. "We are aware that you need water and electricity. A water plant is under construction at Masibekela which will also supply the much needed water to this area," he added. We are also negotiating with service providers such as Umsobomvu and SEDA with the view of bringing their services here. We want to support emerging entrepreneurs," he added.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Local residents celebrate in style.



Department Fosters Community Participation

The Chief Director of Planning and Development in the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Mr Sam Ngubane has urged communities to utilize public participation processes to express their views on service delivery matters. During a live interview with the SABC's Current Affairs programme, Mr Ngubane appealed to communities to utilize consultative forums to make their inputs and express their views about service delivery. His sentiments come in the wake of the recent spate of community uprisings in the Thaba Chweu and Mkhondo Local Municipalities. Mr Ngubane says violent acts where communities in the two municipalities caused havoc by vandalizing public properties, can be prevented if people participate in the forums. The forums are:

- Integrated Development Forums (IDPs),
- Budget Consultative Forum,
- Ward Committee meetings,
- Izimbizo.

According to Mr Ngubane, the source of the problem is failure of communities to attend the forums. "People fail to attend IDP and Ward Committee forums where issues related to service delivery are discussed. It's in these forums where issues such as budget allocation and projects are discussed. However, the majority does not attend to make their inputs," Mr Ngubane said.

Mr Ngubane's appeal for the maximum utilization of community forums coincides with Premier David Mabuza's commitment to reinforce the functionality of the forums. In his State

of the Province address, Mr Mabuza said there is a need to strengthen the functionality of Ward Committees and the Community Development Workers (CDWs) as tools for Public Participation. Mr Ngubane outlined the department's programmes, and urged the community to participate in them. He cited the Local Economic Development (LED) and the Integrated Development Forums (IDP) as examples.

While callers condemned acts of violence, however, they claimed that vandalization of property is a ploy to get the attention of government. "We want better roads. We want water. We want service delivery. If your Ward Councillor is not willing to meet you as a community, what do you do?" asked Jack Zwane from Perdekop. In his response, Director of IDP, Mr Oupa Pilane condemned acts of violence as a way to express dissatisfaction about the performance of councillors. "I urge the community to engage their municipalities about their needs. Be it service related or development issue. If people want their road to be tarred, the IDP Consultative forum is the place to register it. If you have an issue with the increase of tariffs, the budget consultative forum is the right platform to express your grievance," Mr Pilane said.

Mr Ngubane said the department is also responding to the challenges facing municipalities in Mpumalanga. He also appealed to communities to report acts of corruption. "Government operates in a transparent manner. We urge you to contact us if you are not satisfied with the response from your municipalities," Mr Ngubane said.

People who want to report any acts of impropriety can call the anti-corruption toll free number 0800 701 701



GOING LIVE: Chief Director for Development and Planning, Mr Sam Ngubane respond to queries during an interview with SABC's Bheki Nxumalo.





led
Local
Economic
Development

ldp
Integrated
Development
Planning

mig
Municipal
Infrastructure
Grant

pc
Project
Consolidate

isrdp
Integrated Sustainable
Rural Development
Programme

tim
Traditional
Institutional
Management



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