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SECOND QUARTER



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EDITORIAL COMMENT

Welcome to the Local News. In this edition, we bring you activities of the Department in support for municipalities and the Traditional Leadership. From the special Local Government Summit to the roll out plan of waste management trucks, from the announcement of the Provincial Disputes and Claims Committee for Traditional Leadership to the Community Works' Programme.

The establishment of the Provincial Committee on Claims and Disputes for Traditional Leadership marks the beginning of another chapter in the history of the government in its endeavour to establish peaceful and unified tribal communities. As the Premier, Mr David Mabuza indicated during the announcement of committee members. The appointment of the committee is part of the commitment made by the administration of President Jacob Zuma to restore Traditional Leadership to its rightful place in the Government system. The committee members wealth of wisdom and academic knowledge, is what the government has ordered. We wish them success in this mammoth task.

A report tabled in Cabinet indicates an increase in the number of people who have access to municipal services. With regard to outcome 9 on local government, access to essential services has marginally improved and 45 municipalities are implementing the Community Work Programme affording almost 90 000 individuals with work opportunities and a steady income. The report also reveals a steady improvement of financial management of municipalities.

Municipal financial audit outcomes also show some visible improvements with the number of municipalities with disclaimers dropping to 58 in the 2009/10 financial from 111 in 2008/09.

However, municipal financial management still remains an area of concern. Another key challenge is the technical capacity of municipalities to plan, implement, operate and maintain critical infrastructure. As municipalities grapple with this challenge, it gives a ray of hope when one of our municipalities is awarded an accolade for providing water of high quality in its jurisdiction. The Steve Tshwete Local Municipality deserves our congratulations as the winner of the 2011 Blue Drop Award (for water management and water quality control by the Department of Water Affairs. The municipality is the over all winner with 6 Blue Drops in the country.

On 5-6 September the Province held a special Local Government summit, to identify immediate interventions for struggling Municipalities. An intervention programme has been developed and we believe this will bring about an improvement on the performance of these Municipalities.

Census 2011 is well underway. This is the third population numeration since the democratic dispensation. Its importance is underpinned to the fact that it forms part of the 2010 Round of African Censuses, which is aimed at providing a comprehensive population data on the continent for the purpose of planning and aid development. We are all encouraged to participate.

Local News serves as a projector that amplifies what the department is doing to our esteemed stakeholders. We have gone beyond the call of duty to make it an interesting publication to read.

We hope you will enjoy reading it.

Disclaimer

Opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of Mpumalanga Provincial Government, the MEC for Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, neither does it reflect views of the management. Although care has been taken to verify the accuracy of information, the editorial team of this publication takes no responsibility for any inaccuracy.

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



MEC MB MASUKU

One of our immediate interventions is to assist municipalities to fill in their vacant positions at senior management level. All municipalities with vacancies have been requested to advertise all Municipal Managers and vacant section 57 managers' posts. We are happy that significant progress has been made by most municipalities where short listings and interviews have been completed. Appointments are to be concluded shortly. We are confident that we will meet the target we have set for ourselves. We are also confident that the discussions we have had recently with all Executive Mayors to ensure that they employ properly qualified and skilled people, will produce the desired fruits. We have also urged them to ensure that performance management systems are put in place.

The Provincial Executive Council has resolved to support municipalities with the provision of bulk water, through the provision of a unique specialized R100 million capital grant to realize the vision of safe water for all households. The funding will be administered through the Provincial Department of Human Settlements in strategic partnership with the Department of Water Affairs Regional office. Municipalities have already identified projects to be implemented. A monitoring committee will be set up by the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), DWA and the Districts to monitor progress and provide oversight and we expect substantial progress in the implementation by the end of the 2011/12 Financial year.

The debt owed to municipalities continues to be a matter of concern. National government owes R 24 million whilst the provincial government owes about R48 million. We have seen a reduction in the amount owed by Provincial Government as about R21 million has been collected. A Debtors Committee has been set up in terms of section 64(3) and section 44 of the Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003 which obligate the Provincial Treasury and COGTA to intervene and assist municipalities to recover government owed debts for services rendered for property and service charges. In this regard a circular No 28 has been issued to all departments reminding them to verify and settle their accounts. The committee will also ensure that municipalities correct their billing systems through cleansing their data to ensure that correct accounts are issued.

We also call upon all citizens to pay for their services. The slow payment for services has an adverse effect on municipalities and has caused some of them to fall into distress. The debts owed by individuals and private and public institutions to municipalities remains a great concern. Currently the debt owed to municipalities is R 1, 5 billion.

We remain committed to assist our municipalities in strengthening their fight against any corrupt activities. We are assisting municipalities to establish Municipal Public Accounts Committees (MPACs). Their roles will be to provide assurance that public funds are properly managed; spent as intended; and that there has been best possible value received from funds.

All our municipalities have adopted their IDPs and budget for 2011/12. It's important to note that the quality of the IDPs produced has improved. We have also developed the draft guidelines on ward plans that will guide ward committees on the development of integrated development plans.

We have lifted the Section 139(1) (b) interventions in Lekwa and Thembisile Hani Local Municipalities, which were the last two municipalities still under administration. We will continue to support these municipalities through an after care support to prevent any relapse.

MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF THE HOD



(HOD) MR MD MAHLOBO

The Department has been ewestruck by the level of commitment shown by municipalities in an effort to improve the financial viability of the third sphere of government, during the special Local Government Summit. The next challenge is to implement resolutions taken during the summit. We are delighted that the summit has once more helped us all as Local Government practitioners to have the same understanding of what has to be done in dealing with the challenges facing the municipalities.

We congratulate the new SALGA leadership for their elections. Your election could not have come at a better time. We hope you will pick up the spear and continue where your predecessors have left it off. With you at the helm, we are sure that our municipalities will never be same again. We trust that you will give the kind of leadership that municipalities require in order to fulfil their mandate as enshrined in the Constitution. The department commits itself to work with you for the betterment of our municipalities.

We have taken note of the resolutions taken during the SALGA conference. The resolutions show that the new leadership has a grasp of challenges that bedevil municipalities. Our esteemed Councillors have their fingers on pulse over issues that need to be attended to urgently. They are aware about the need to appoint people with the required skills in filling vacancies for Municipal Managers, Chief Financial Officers and Section 57 Managers.

Finance Minister, Pravin Gordhan has tabled a municipal oversight report, with crucial information on municipal budget, the expenditure and access to services. Although the report showed that more people had gained access to essential services during the last three financial years, the break in trust between residents and local government was identified as the biggest obstacle. He cited the break of trust as the source for the service delivery protests.

Of great concern is the bleak picture about the financial state of affairs in the municipalities, in part because of faulty service accounts, inability to collect debts and an increase in the number of militant taxpayers' associations, which hold back payments due to disputes with municipalities.

As COGTA, we view the report in a very serious light, and are working tirelessly to assist municipalities to overcome these issues. We are aware that failure to deal with them may have undesirable consequences such as unreliable services, higher maintenance costs and transmission losses. Our endeavour to make Local Government Everybody's Business is yielding positive results. The leadership in the municipalities is coming closer to the space.

We also congratulate Premier David Mabuza for the establishment of the Provincial Committee of the Claims and Disputes. This initiative, will go a long way in resolving the disputes that are seen as a risk that will torn our tribal communities apart, eroding the efforts of government of building a peaceful society . The success of the committee hinges on the co-operation of parties involved. We call upon everybody to accept the outcomes of the committee. We as COGTA will provide the committee the necessary support.

SUMMIT RESOLVES TO TURN THE TIDE AGAINST STRUGGLING MUNICIPALITIES



DATA ANALYSIS: Msukaliqwa Mayor, Cllr Siphongwe goes through presentations through a fine-comb tooth during the special Local Government Summit at the Ehlanzeni District office.

More than 70% of municipalities in Mpumalanga are grant dependent. Poor rates of revenue collection cash and flow management are cited amongst the contributing factors and high expenses on non-core functions. The state of the municipalities inhibits service delivery. A special Local Government summit was convened at the Ehlanzeni District Municipality by the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) to assist municipalities to turn the situation around.

Mpumalanga Premier, Mr David Mabuza told Mayors, Speakers, Municipal Managers and Senior Municipal officials to review organograms and policies as part of the solution. "The manner you are structured, you will not be able to deliver accordingly. Many organizational structures have not been reviewed. Most municipalities do not have a revenue base," Mr Mabuza cautioned.

The Premier's sentiments were echoed by the Head of COGTA, Mr David Mahlobo. Lack of revenue and failure to attract people with expertise, according to Mr Mahlobo, aggravates the situation.

"Our people need water. The challenge is that municipalities are unable to attract people with expertise to run departments that will provide water. In some cases, municipalities do not have proper billing systems to create the revenue that will enhance its financial viability," he said.

During the two days, delegates spent time interrogating solutions to the problems facing their municipalities. The summit resolved that municipalities implement the following resolutions to turn the situation around:

CAPACITY BUILDING:

- Create sufficient technical capacity in areas of service delivery.

IDP & PLANNING:

- Ensure that IDPs reflect the needs of the people on the ground.

ACCESS TO WATER:

- Finalize the provincial water master plan by the end of September 2011
- Align infrastructure plans to address aging water infrastructure
- Prioritize the matter of illegal connections and non-revenue water.

ACCESS TO SANITATION SERVICES:

- Improve sanitation in areas previously excluded.

ACCESS TO ELECTRICITY:

- Finalize provincial electricity master plan in all municipalities.
- Settle all ESKOM debts to prevent cut offs.

ACCESS TO REFUSE REMOVAL SERVICES

- Roll out of waste management services to areas excluded before.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

- Conclude spatial planning development framework to address the growth trajectory for each municipality within 6 months.
- Review indigent register.
- Implement cost recovery plan immediately.

OPERATION CLEAN AUDIT 2014

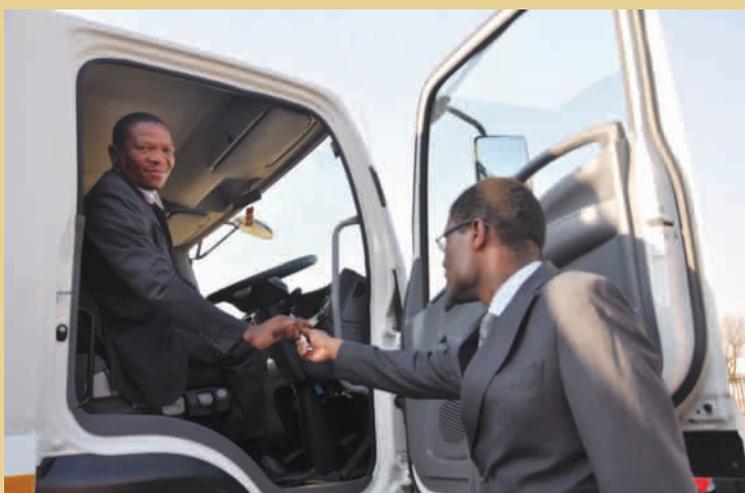
- Ensure clean audit opinions by 2014

This was the second summit for municipalities by COGTA this year, after the watershed Inaugural Local Government Lekgotla.

MEC MADALA MASUKU HANDS OVER REFUSE REMOVAL TRUCKS TO EMALAHLENI AND MKHONDO LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES



CLEAN ENVIRONMENT: MEC Madala Masuku, the HOD, Mr David Mahlobo and Emalahleni Local Municipality Mayor, Cllr Salome Sithole marvel at the refuse removal truck at the Lynville Park.



CHECK POINT: Mkhondo Municipal Mayor, Cllr Bhekabani Mtshali receives the key for the truck from MEC Masuku to test-drive it.

The MEC for the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs in Mpumalanga, Mr Madala Masuku has handed over two refuse removal trucks to Emalahleni and Mkhondo Local Municipalities. This initiative is in line with the Department's Waste Management Plan and to ensure that municipalities improve and clean their environment.

The first truck was handed to Emalahleni at Lynville Park, Emalahleni and the second truck was handed over to Mkhondo at Gert Sibande District Municipality offices in Ermelo. Both trucks each worth R2, 6 million were received by the Executive Mayors, Cllr Salome Sithole of Emalahleni and Cllr Bhekabani Mtshali of Mkhondo.

During the handover, Mr Masuku reiterated COGTA's commitment towards implementation of its Waste Management Plan. "As a department we realised that the two municipalities experienced challenges with their existing refuse removal trucks and we felt that we needed to intervene. We hope the municipalities will utilise the vehicles effectively to ensure a healthy environment to the benefit of our communities" said Masuku.

Both Executive Mayors expressed gratitude to the MEC and COGTA on behalf of their municipalities and communities. They also pledged that the trucks will be utilised responsibly to ensure a cleaner and healthier environment in their municipalities.

As part of its waste management programme the department has rolled out a programme of getting the youth involved in cleaning up their areas. 50 youths have been recruited in each of the two municipalities as part of the waste management programme. The youth have been trained and are involved in the daily cleaning up of areas under these municipalities.

COGTA remains committed to assisting municipalities to deliver quality services to all communities in the province.

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT ZOOMS INTO TRADITIONAL CLAIMS AND DISPUTES TO RESOLVE THEM



MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE: (Back Row) Dr Joseph Thwala, Dr William Ndlala, Advocate Simon Mahlangu and Mr Phineas Nxumalo. Front Row: Mr Mangisi Zitha, Ms Sizani Mdluli, Mr Bagudi Tolo, (Chairperson of the National Committee) and Ms Gloria Fakude.

The Mpumalanga Provincial Government's determination to bring to an end the traditional leadership disputes has been confirmed by the establishment of a disputes and claims committee. The committee was announced by the Premier, Mr David Mabuza: "As provincial government, we have noted with concern that there is a substantial number of unresolved disputes and claims on traditional leadership in the province. We have looked for men and women of substance to be considered for the membership of the Provincial Committee on Traditional Leadership Disputes and Claims. In this committee that we are announcing today, we have people with a vast knowledge on anthropology, genealogy of tribes, legal minds, researches, sound academics and high integrity", the Premier said.

The committee, with a five years mandate, consists of the following members:

- Advocate SimonMahlangu (Full Time)
- Mr. Mangisi Zitha (Fulltime)
- Dr. William Ndlala (Full Time)
- Dr. Joseph Thwala (Full Time)
- Mr. Phineas Nxumalo(Full Time)

PART TIME CANDIDATES

- Ms. Sizani Mdluli (Part Time)
- Ms. Gloria Fakude (Part Time)

Government considers traditional leaders important partners in the implementation of developmental programme, especially the rural development plan announced by President Jacob Zuma. The establishment of the committee follows government's implementation of recommendations by the erstwhile Nhlapo Commission. As such, unresolved disputes are seen as a threat to the plan and

the unity of the nation, as Premier Mabuza indicated: "The continued divisions and disputes undermine the symbol of unity that our traditional leaders are re known for. These divisions and disputes further spill onto the communities thus dividing the very communities we seek to lead in unity".

The committee is expected to focus and make recommendations on the following:

- Whether a claim on traditional leadership or headmanship was established in accordance with customary laws and customs.
- Cases where a position of traditional leadership title or right is under contestation.
- Claims by communities to be recognized as traditional communities.
- The legitimacy of the establishment or disestablishment of tribes.
- Disputes resulting from the determination of traditional authority boundaries as a result of merging or division of tribes.
- All traditional leadership claims and disputes dating from 1st September 1927 to the coming into operation of provincial legislation dealing with traditional leadership and related matters.

Gender related disputes relating to traditional leadership positions arising after 27 April 1994.

As the committee gets down to business, Mr Mabuza implored all the claimants and people of the province to fully support and cooperate with it and to respect the outcome of this process whether it is in your favour or not.

COGTA In Action



ACCOUNTABILITY: Mbombela Municipality's Speaker, Cllr Jester Sidell analyses presentations during a special Local Government Summit in Nelspruit.



STAND-BY: Fire Fighters prepare to distribute food parcels and blankets to storm victims at the Sibange Community Hall.



THINK-TANK: Ehlanzeni District's Ms Marika Oosthuizen focuses on discussions during COGTA's workshop on legislation for performance agreements and employment contracts of Municipal Managers.



DANCING FOR THE KING: Women in traditional gear entertain guests during a traditional pilgrimage of the Mbuyane Traditional Council at Hlau-Hlau.



ECONOMIC MATTERS: COGTA's Local Economic Development Section officials, Mr Jabulani Mayindi and Mr Raymond Shabangu participate in a round table discussion for a municipal LED strategy for 2012-2016.



FACT-FINDING-MISSION: A delegation of officials from Mpumalanga visited three provinces on a study tour aimed at bolstering the Presidential Hotline. (Seated): Ms Mantshodi Rankweteke, Mr Mabutho Sithole and Mr Sello Tshabalala. (Middle) Ms Sibongile Mabuza, Ms Mamsy Mashele and Ms Kehiloe Pekane. (Back) Mr Moloko Baloyi, Mr Simphiwe Kunene and Mr Lebona Mosia during the visit to the Free State



FOCUS: COGTA's Ms Zanele Sithole, Mr Kabu Nkadimeng and Ms Bongi Mtshweni pay attention to presentations during the department's performance review session in Emalahleni.



GLORIOUS MOMENT: Steve Tshwete Municipality enjoys the crest wave of success as the Executive Mayor, Cllr Mike Masina receives SALGA Awards from Provincial Chairperson, Speedo Mashilo and MEC Pinky Phosa.



MEDIA TALK: MEC Madala Masuku, accompanied by HOD, Mr David Mahlobo and Chief Director for Development and Planning, Mr Sam Ngubane addresses the media in Nelspruit. Mr Mohlalefi Lebotha facilitates the discussion.



SOUND BYTE: SABC News' Camera person, Ms Mpumi Poswa takes pictures during COGTA's media briefing session in Nelspruit.



CAKE FOR MADIBA: Bushbuckridge Municipal Councillors and pupils from Hhoyo Hhoyo Secondary School join MEC Masuku in the cutting of a cake on Mandela Day in Cuning Moore.



WATER CONNECTIONS: MEC Masuku assists a local resident in Cuning Moore to fetch water from a tap after fixing it as part of Mandela Day celebration.

SALGA MUNICIPAL AWARDS WINNERS IN MPUMALANGA



EHLANZENI DISTRICT

- Best District on MIG Expenditure
- Best District on Disaster Management
- Best District on Financial Viability Management
- Best District on Implementation of Transversal Programmes on HIV/AIDS.
- Best District in Municipal Transformation and Organisational Development
- Best District on IDP credibility



GERT SIBANDE DISTRICT

- Best District on Communications
- Best District on Public Participation
- Best District on Implementation of Batho Pele Principles



STEVE TSHWETE

- Best Municipality on MIG Expenditure
- Best Municipality on Implementation of Transversal Programmes
- Best Municipality on Municipal Transformation and Organizational Development.



BUSHBUCKRIDGE

- Best Municipality on IDP credibility.
- Best Municipality on LED.



NKOMAZI

- Best Municipality on Disaster Management
- Best Municipality on Implementation of Batho Pele Principles
- Best Municipality on Implementation of Transversal Programmes on HIV/AIDS.



EMAKHAZENI

- Best Municipality on Communications



MBOMBELA

- Best Municipality on Financial viability Management.

DIPALESENG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY INAUGURATES MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS



NEW BEGINNING: Mkhondo Executive Mayor, Cllr Bhekabani Mtshali (left) attended the inauguration of Dipaleseng's Mayor, Cllr Noliqwa Nhlapo (Middle) in Balfour. Gert Sibande District's Flora Maboa-Boltman was there too.

The Dipaleseng Local Municipality hosted an occasion to inaugurate the new Executive Mayor, Cllr Noliqwa Nhlapo and Councillors elected during the recent local government elections. The function was held at the Siyathemba Stadium. Executive Mayors, Speakers and Councillors from various local municipalities in the Gert Sibande District and the community attended the function.

In her address, Cllr Nhlapo also urged the community to support the new leadership. Your participation is important in activities of the municipalities. "Community development and service delivery require all stakeholders to work together because this is not a simple task that can be achieved by one sector without the assistance of other sectors," she said. Cllr Nhlapo said the council will pay special attention to the following objectives:

- Building local economies to create more employment, decent work and sustainable livelihoods;
- Improving local public services and broaden access to them;
- Building a more united, non-racial, integrated and safer Dipaleseng;
- Promote more active community participation in local government; and
- Ensure more effective, accountable and clean local government that works together with national and provincial government.

Political parties pledged their support for the new council despite their differences. They all committed themselves to put first community development and service delivery ahead of their differences. The ANC's Mr Muzi Chirwa pledged support for the municipality in improving people's lives in Dipaleseng. He said the ANC will continue to support the municipality at all times for the realization of issues raised by the community during campaigns ahead of the elections.



LEADING THE WAY: Mayor Nhlapo, delivered a key note address during the inauguration.

CWP PROMOTES JOB CREATION IN MPUMALANGA



INTERVENTION: CWP participants hands over a house built for Ms Karlina Mbhendana in Belfast, in the Bushbuckridge Municipality.

The Community Works' Programme (CWP) in Mpumalanga has created several job opportunities for the unemployed.

Government has set a target of 2000 job opportunities by 2014 through the Community Works' Programme (CWP) in the Province. Nationally, the programme is expected to create 237 000 job opportunities. A budget of R49, 766 million has been set aside to pay for the stipend of the workers. The CWP is designed as an employment safety net, not an employment solution for participants. It provides a baseline in terms of income security and economic access and participation. It offers 2 days of work per week, providing 100 days of work spread throughout the year.

Since the beginning of this year, a total of 3,626 young people, 25 people with disabilities and 4,147 women participated in the programme. The workers have been paid stipends for visiting 58 homes to assist with cooking, cleaning and washing. They assisted people to register for social grants, helped people in queues in hospitals and at pay out points to ensure that they are attended to in time. Some have been employed to patrol the streets to safeguard residents. They cut grass, clear dumping sites, clean school toilets, households, community churches, and continue the maintenance of community gardens

and sports grounds. In some areas, they constructed pit toilets, painted school store rooms, cleaned storm water drainage pipes and filled road potholes.

So far, the programme is piloted at the Chief Albert Luthuli and Bushbuckridge Municipalities and will be rolled over to the 16 other municipalities in Mpumalanga. In Chief Albert Luthuli Municipality, there are 8 sites for the programme, namely: Tjakastad, Mbejeka, Avontuur, Mooiplaas, Kromdraai, Nhlazatshe, Oshoek and Badplaas. In the Bushbuckridge, several villages have benefitted from the programme. The villages are: Elephant whispers, Hosana, Thulani, Cork, Belfast, Somerset, Justicia, Mabarihule, Huntington, Lillydale, Kildare, Kildare B, Mariti, New forest, Casteel, Zoeknog, Green Valley, Cottondale, Islington, Berlington, Edenberg, Ludlow and Dingledale.

Each municipality has been allocated 1000 job opportunities and due to limited resources, COGTA in Mpumalanga has been tasked to mobilize resources to cover the remaining 16000 work opportunities, excluding Bushbuckridge and Chief Albert Luthuli Municipalities, to achieve the target of 36 000 work opportunities created set in the Outcome 9 Service Delivery Agreement.

COGTA PARTNERS WITH BANKING SECTOR TO SUPPORT STORM VICTIMS



RELIEF: Nkomazi Mayor, Cllr Thulisile Khoza hands over donations to one of the families at Sibange. Standard Bank's Mr Lawrence Ntimane (second from left) looks on.



OPTIMISM: Residents from Sibange waited patiently in the community Hall for the delivery of essential parcels

Christmas came early this year for storm victims in the Nkomazi Municipality. The Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) and Standard Bank teamed up to help the victims.

A consignment of food, blankets and school uniforms was delivered to the families at the Sibange Community Hall. Within the jurisdiction of the Nkomazi Municipality, the storm left a trail of devastation in several villages, such as Mbuzini,

Hhoyi, Sibange, Masibekela, Dlunduma, Magudu, Sibayeni and Bosfontein. The roof top of houses and schools were swept away, leaving the families homeless and pupils with no place to attend classes. At the time, COGTA provided the families with tents as temporary shelter. Pupils were crammed into classes which were not affected until the buildings were renovated.

Nkomazi Executive Mayor, Cllr Thulisile Khoza praised the families for their perseverance until the donation. "The challenges faced by government are huge. The resources to deal with the needs of the country are very limited. We are grateful that you have been patient. Your perseverance has paid off. Today we are here to donate food and blankets," the Mayor said.

She further applauded the gesture of Standard Bank and COGTA in pursuit of the less privileged. "The location of our people in the deep rural areas has not deterred you from helping them. We are grateful for what Standard Bank has done." The Mayor concluded.

Standard Bank's Mr Lawrence Ntimane said the bank's commitment to support depressed communities has no boundaries. He said the support is in line with the bank's commitment to intervene to the people who are in need. "We are not doing this for the first time. We will continue to provide humanitarian assistance even in the future. We are part of the community, and therefore what affects them, affects us too," said Mr. Ntimane in Solidarity.

COGTA is responsible for co-ordinating disaster management in the province.

SOUTH AFRICA AND MOZAMBIQUE COLLABORATES TO KEEP CITIES AND TOWNS CLEAN



WORKING TOGETHER: Ms Mabudafhasi, Mr Masuku, Ms Chichava and Cllr Khoza team up to plant trees at the Komati Border during the launch of the clean towns and cities project.

The third leg of the clean cities and towns project has been launched in Komatipoort, on the border, between South Africa and Mozambique. The project seeks to encourage communities to keep the environment clean through the creation of a partnership between government, the community and business. A similar project was launched in the Eastern Cape and Gauteng provinces.

The launch of the project enjoyed international status as Deputy Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, Ms Rejoice Mabudafhasi and the Mozambican Deputy Minister of Environment, Ms Ana Paulo Samo Gudo Chichava teamed up to plant trees at the Komati Border that separate the two countries. The two were joined by MEC for Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), Mr Madala Masuku, Nkomazi and Mbo mbela Executive Mayors, Cllr Thulisile Khoza and Cllr Catherine Dlamini respectively, government officials and the local community.

The border post became a focal point for the entourage to plant trees. Addressing her Mozambican counterpart, Ms Mabudafhasi said the trees will be a symbol of unity between the two countries. "Every time when you drive through the border, you should take time to water the trees. They should be a reminder about what the project we are launching today, stand for," she said.

The border area is usually a scene of 10 meters long queues for people travelling to Mozambique during the December holidays. Littering characterizes the area at the end of the holidays. The painting of the dust bins was aimed at encouraging the public to use them for throwing the waste.

Addressing the community later at the Komatipoort Community Hall, Ms Mabudafhasi appealed to the community to turn waste into wealth. "Waste can cause health hazards for us. It pollutes the environment we live in. The question we should ask ourselves is: How can we make a living out of it?" she asked. She added that waste collection has the potential to break the jobs-dependency-syndrome in the country. "A number of waste collecting companies have been established in the country. These companies employ our people to collect waste that is sent to produce clothes. These companies make a huge profit. You too can do the same, instead of waiting for government to give you a job," she concluded.

Mabudafhasi's counterpart, Ms Chichava, said the clean cities and towns project is in line with a campaign in her country aimed at creating awareness about waste management. "We are teaching our people about a clean environment. If our countries can work together in promoting a clean environment, the whole of Africa can be clean," she said. She added that the youth are critical for the sustainability of the environment and therefore must play their part. "Long after we have gone, the trees we are planting today will be there. The youth must continue to plant more trees," she said.

In Mpumalanga, COGTA has purchased two waste collection trucks for two municipalities to support them for waste management. MEC Masuku told the gathering that the department is helping municipalities to address the matter. He added that the subject was also discussed during the recent Local Government Special Summit held at the Ehlanzeni District Municipality.

COGTA SPENDS MADIBA'S 67 MINUTES WITH THE CUNNING MOORE COMMUNITY



WATER SOLUTION: MEC Madala Masuku fixes a water tap at Cuning Moore on Mandela Day.

The Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) has spent 67 minutes on Mandela Day providing solutions to the poverty, water and health problems at Cuning Moore. Situated in the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality, the area has a shortage of water and poverty is reportedly high. Ironically, water taps have been installed, but the system has been vandalised. The land is fertile, but is under-utilized due to lack of water. The local clinic operates 24 hours a day but is under-resourced.

As part of the celebration for the Mandela Day, MEC for COGTA, Mr Madala Masuku changed suits for overalls to address the problems, in honour of the first democratic President in South Africa, Dr Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. Mr Masuku fixed several taps with the help of officials from the department and local councillors. Subsequently, water was made available and the local community was seen fetching water.

He further painted windows of the local Hhoyo Hhoyo High School to protect learners against distraction during school hours. As part of the food security programme, Mr Masuku joined the local community in the planting of seeds. He later delivered new chairs to the clinic, turning it into a place of hope for patients. The procession also delivered food parcels to poor families in that area.

Mandela turned 93 years old this year and his birthday is celebrated by helping the poor in the society and provide solutions to the problems. The 67 minutes refers to the 67 years in which he spent fighting selflessly against injustice. His speeches are a legacy in the struggle against social injustice. Part of his inaugural speech, which he delivered in Parliament in 1994, is by far, one of the most quoted speeches in his Biography, Long Walk to Freedom. In his speech, he declared: "The sun shall never set down on so glorious the human achievements. Let freedom reign. God bless Africa."

With Home Affairs mobile truck on site along with the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) and the South African Police Services (SAPS), the local community was afforded an opportunity to apply for Birth Certificates, Identity Documents and social grants, as key to poverty interventions.

During the cutting of the cake to mark Madiba's birthday, Mr Masuku appealed to the local community to act against vandalism. "One of the biggest challenges facing Mpumalanga is water. Here in Cuning Moore we have realised that water is not a problem. The problem is vandalism against the system that should bring water, the taps", he said, and added: "We appeal to all of you, not to vandalize the taps. We have fixed them now. This should not happen again."



TOAST FOR MADIBA: World-acclaimed Photographer, Mr Sam Nzima who took the famous Hector Peterson picture in Soweto, joined COGTA at Cuning Moore to celebrate the Mandela Day.

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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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