

## **POLICY AND BUDGET SPEECH 2015/16**

### **VOTE 4: DEPARTMENT OF CO-OPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS**

**BY HON. R. M MTSHWENI (MPL)**

**MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE**

**29 MAY 2015**

**Madam Speaker, Hon. B.T Shongwe**

**Deputy Speaker, Hon. D B Dube**

**Honourable Premier: D.D. Mabuza**

**Honourable Members of the Executive Council**

**Honourable Members of the Mpumalanga Legislature,**

**His Majesties King Makhosokhe II and King Mabhoko III**

**Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Provincial House of Traditional  
Leaders, Kgoshi LM Mokoena and Inkhosi SG Ngomane**

**Our revered Traditional Leaders, Amakhosi / Magoshi**

**Chairperson of SALGA, Cllr Mafika Nkosi**

**Honourable Executive Mayors, Speakers, Chief Whips and Councilors**

**The Director-General, Heads of Departments and Municipal Managers**

**The Leadership of the ANC and Alliance partners**

**Distinguished Guests, Friends, fellow citizens**

1. Madam Speaker, 21 years ago, the ANC and its alliance partners under the leadership of former President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela adopted the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which sought to uplift the socio-economic conditions of the previously disadvantaged people. True to its tradition of caring for the masses, the ANC undertook the RDP programme as a ploy to provide opportunities for the majority of our people who have been subjected to abject poverty and sub-standard living conditions by the apartheid regime for four decades. These included opportunities of earning decent wages, a national security system and redistribution of land.

2. Premised on the Freedom Charter which was adopted by the mass democratic movement 60 years ago in Kliptown, the RDP was a progressive programme which paved the way for infants and their mothers to receive free medical care and for poverty-stricken primary school children to receive free meals.
3. The provision of electricity and water, Madam Speaker, was central to the realization of the RDP, as articulated by former President Mandela, when he said: **"Most of our people in the rural areas have had to do without electricity. In most cases this has meant having to walk long distances to collect wood. Many are using other expensive sources of power to meet their needs such as batteries or petrol and diesel driven generators. All these things are expensive. In our Reconstruction and Development Programme, electrification is central to improving the lives of those neglected by apartheid"**.
4. We must indicate upfront Madam Speaker that the ANC-led government had foresaw that South Africa's economic growth depended heavily on the provision of electricity. For this reason, a firm commitment was made to exercise fiscal discipline in order to encourage foreign investment as the first step towards the realization of this and many other socio-economic programmes.
5. I want to assure this decorous house that we are already implementing bold measures for the realization of this ideal. The reduced spending for the compensation of employees, the sharing of costs for departmental functions are, but some of the bold measures we are undertaking in this financial year as proposed by the MEC for Finance, Hon. Eric Kholwane in the first Provincial 2014/15 adjusted budget speech.

6. The commitment by this administration to improve the lives of our people often draws unnecessary criticism by the opposition. Madam Speaker, this criticism does not only fuel us to do more, but has the potential to make opposition parties, disposable items of the political trash bin in the future, for wasting precious time opposing every solution, aimed at improving the lives of the people.
7. As we mark the 60<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the freedom charter and the RDP respectively this year, we are propelled by the desire to make the aspirations of our people in the delivery of electricity and water, a reality. We remain unshaken in our resolve to overcome the challenges that inhibit the delivery of basic services.

### **WATER INTERVENTIONS:**

8. Madam Speaker, the provision of water remains one of the five (5) key priorities of this administration. As a province we have taken a deliberate intervention to ensure that all our people have access to water by December 2015 without fail and are committed to the attainment of this ideal.
9. During the 2014/15 financial year, our intervention resulted in the provision of water to a further **15 151** households. Statistically, the water backlog in our province has been reduced from **48 528 to 33 377**. This accounts for a reduction of **31%** of the number of formal households which had no access to water.
10. Through the Municipal infrastructure Grant and other Water and Sanitation implementation support programmes by the Department of Water and Sanitation we have invested in excess of **R2 billion** to address water and sanitation challenges in our Province. With this allocation we have commissioned **84** bulk water supply and reticulation projects across all our municipalities.

We are happy to report to this august house that the 9 steel reservoirs in three of our municipalities are at completion stage awaiting bulk for filling and testing to start servicing our people with access to water in these critical areas.

11. Each reservoir has a storage capacity of 2 mega-litres with a potential to supply water to an estimated 2222 households with a population of 13332 on full waterborne sanitation and household connections. These will augment the current water supply to the following areas:
  - **Mangweni and Steenbok** villages which are in the Nkomazi Local Municipality.
  - **Kabokweni, Ka-Shabalala, Matsulu and Phola** which are in the Mbombela Local Municipality.
  - **Casteel, Thusanang and Cunningmore *which are*** in the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality.
12. Madam Speaker, access to water is a Constitutional right. **Section 27 1 (b) of the Constitution** makes the delivery of water an obligation for the state. The co-operation of our municipalities, who took heed of the clarion call by our Premier, Hon. DD Mabuza to reprioritize the delivery of water in their budgets, stimulated the progress we have recorded thus far.
13. By ring-fencing their budgets and redirecting MIG allocations to focus on the delivery of water, municipal councils have contributed to our efforts of meeting our Constitutional obligation. With this approach, the universal access target of **December 2015** is within our reach.

14. In Bushbuckridge Municipality we have a good story to tell. **15 151** households in **24** villages are now provided with water. The villages include: ***Skhukhusa, Ga-Relani C and D, Ntlepule, Hlamalani, Sidlamakhosi, Madjembeni, London, Township, Mkhulu-Line, New-Line, Crigban, Dingleydale A and B, Agincourt, Chabelagaza and Oakley, Cunningmoor A, Mathibela, Rooiboklaagte A and Violet Bank.***
15. Madam Speaker, this progress is the outcome of the partnership between COGTA, the Department of Water and Sanitation and Rand Water in which **R298 million** was invested to complete Phase 1 of the water reticulation projects. Our focus in this financial year is Phase 2, where we will continue reticulating villages to provide water to households. We will report back to the house in due course about the Phase 2 progress.
16. We have invested **R601 million** to complete this body of work. We are convinced that this will contribute to the milestones set out in the National Development Plan (NDP) to provide water to all our people by 2030. Madam Speaker, we have noted with regret the protests by some communities in Mpumalanga, demanding water amongst other delivery needs.
17. We acknowledge the complaints and we are doing everything humanly possible to provide water to all our communities. We condemn in the strongest possible terms violent acts that accompany these protests. We condemn the acts of hooliganism that accompany some of these protest actions wherein damage to public property and loss of lives occurs together with interruption of service delivery and schooling.
18. We appeal to our communities to be cautious of individuals who masquerade as Biblical Moses. We must remind them that there was one Moses who led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt.

19. In Bushbuckridge as in other areas of our province and the country at large, it was the ANC-led government which brought them out of apartheid misery and it is the same ANC led government that will bring them the water they need. Siyaqhuba Madam Speaker the finish line is within sight.
20. We acknowledge the need to accelerate the pace in our water delivery plans, and pursuant to this challenge, we will soon be drilling boreholes in the next two to four months as a short term solution. In the 2015/16 financial year, we are investing in excess of **1,8 billion** for the delivery of water to communities including the rural farms and the towns experiencing a rapid population growth, as a result of the coal mining industry.
21. Part of this funding, will be utilized for the implementation of four bulk and distribution water schemes for our communities in the Mkhondo Municipality located in Piet Retief, Entombe, Ntithane, Ezitholeni, Congo, Alma, Madola, Waterside, Krom, Bergplaas and Empumelelweni.
22. We will pursue the water delivery plans until those parents who are reportedly forcing their children to skip classes on Fridays on account of fetching water, find no reason to do so.
23. Madam Speaker we commend the support of the private sector in the delivery of water, as we have seen in some of our municipalities. Our shoe-string budget remains one of the major obstacles to deliver water adequately. Infrastructure grants, such as the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG), Municipal Water Infrastructure Grant (MWIG), and Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant (RBIG) remain a solution to overcome the budget constraints.

24. The public-private partnership is proving to be another source of support to address the shortage of water supply and sanitation throughout the province. In Emalahleni Local Municipality for example, the mining industry has partnered with the municipality to augment the water supply by installing a 15 Mega Litre Water Reclamation Plant. With this partnership, a total of 100 Mega Litres of water is purified and distributed to the communities of Emalahleni.
25. This case study reinforces one of the government's nine point plan of encouraging private sector investment, as tabled by His Excellency, President J.G Zuma during the State of the Nation Address. Water is the bedrock of our growing economy. We look forward to a greater participation of the mining sector and other private companies as we march side by side in resolving water and other service delivery challenges.

### **WAR ON LEAKS PROGRAMME**

26. Madam Speaker, it is estimated that 7 billion litres of water is lost per annum through leakages. Principally these losses happen on the municipal water supply systems due to the poor state of the delivery infrastructure, which has overtime run its life span and dilapidated.
27. We are focusing our attention in this area as part of a solution to water challenges to assist municipalities to quantify the extent of water losses, prioritise interventions to repair, refurbish and upgrade the infrastructure associated with this unacceptable wastage of such a precious resource.
28. We are assisting municipalities to improve their revenue for water through the reduction of the unacceptably high Non-revenue Water losses associated with both the infrastructure distribution losses and tariffs that are not properly structured. We have partnered with the Department of Water and Sanitation to prevent a further loss of water in the **'war on leakages' Initiative.**

29. In this financial year, we have set aside **R8, 5 million** for this initiative which is labour intensive aimed at Youth Job creation.

This project is being piloted in two municipalities, namely Lekwa and Umjindi. In Lekwa Local Municipality, the project has created job opportunities for fifty youths locally for the duration of eight months, and it commenced in October last year.

30. In Umjindi Local Municipality, the project has created 46 job opportunities for the local youths and will last for three to four months. The project entails fixing the pipes and taps, installing bulk meters and Pressure reducing valves to reduce excess water losses in the water supply bulk and distribution lines. We are convinced that by the end of the projects, the participants would have gained valuable experience in the field of Water Demand management and basic plumbing.

31. We call upon our communities to use water sparingly and to protect the water infrastructure jealously as a way of appreciation for the intervention. Furthermore, we call upon our communities to stop illegal connections that cause damage to the infrastructure. Part of the shortage of water in some communities can be attributed to the illegal connections to the water pipes, which reduce the system pressures and give rise to the protests I have referred to earlier on.

32. We are re-enforcing methods of dealing with those who temper with our water supply systems. While we will work hard with the municipalities to identify and formalize these unauthorized connections in cases where our people have illegally connected on bulk lines for household consumptions, we will deal harshly with those illegal connections associated with other forms of uses such as illegal connections for irrigation purposes among others.



33. Madam Speaker, the war to provide water is being waged on all fronts. Some of the challenges that inhibit the delivery are capacity-related. We welcome the intervention by Rand Water for training graduates to provide technical support to some of our municipalities. Forty process controllers have undergone intensive training at the Rand Water Academy last year and are now serving their internship for a period of 3 years in three of our municipalities, namely Govan Mbeki, Emalahleni and Thembisile Hani.
34. Thirty of the trainees are scientists and five of them are permanently employed. This support, Madam Speaker is in sync with our plans as a department to help municipalities improve their Blue and Green Drop compliance status.
35. Madam Speaker, the effects of forced removals of the previously disadvantaged communities by the apartheid regime is still felt even on this day. Not only were they relocated on areas unsuitable for human habitation, they were also located in potentially health hazardous areas with no proper waste management.
36. In this financial year, the upgrading of waste water treatment plants and improvement of waste collection and management is at the top of our priority list. **R500 million** has been budgeted for this purpose as we roll up our sleeves to stem the tide against the pollution of our environment. This amount will be utilized to connect our people to decent sanitation services and ensure the protection of our natural water resources and environment against pollution.
37. Working together with the Department of Human Settlements, we will continue to build waterborne toilets in accordance with our commitment to restore the dignity of our people, eroded by draconian rule for decades, in pursuit of Section 10 of the Constitution, which stipulates that: ***"Everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected"***.

## **PAYMENTS FOR ELECTRICITY AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES**

38. Madam Speaker, the electricity bill remains high and some of our municipalities are struggling to keep the lights on. Four of our municipalities are listed by Eskom amongst the 20 nationally, which have contributed to the accumulation of a billion rand debt.

Our department is working around the clock to mitigate the adverse effects that may be caused if Eskom implement power cuts.

39. We welcome the call made by Hon. Minister Pravin Gordhan when he tabled the budget vote for his department, that extra measures must be introduced to expedite the payment of the outstanding debt owed by government departments to municipalities. Furthermore, we embrace his call for a government-wide campaign to cultivate a culture of civic responsibility and payment for services throughout all communities. We appeal to the departments, businesses and communities to pay for the services for municipalities to meet their financial obligations of paying the Eskom debts, finance maintenance costs and expand electricity connections in identified areas.

40. The financial distress which our municipalities find themselves in is due in part to the non payment of municipal services by departments and our communities. Unless this problem is confronted head on the situation will deteriorate even further.

41. Illegal connections (izinyoka-nyoka) are the major breeding ground where municipalities bleed financially. With the growing number of new settlements almost everyday, unscrupulous individuals connive with community members to connect illegally to the grid and consume electricity without pay. This exacerbates the high electricity debt owed to Eskom.

Municipalities are robbed of an income that should be utilized to extend the electricity networks to areas where communities are waiting patiently.

42. These illegal connections are fast becoming a major human risk in areas where this practice is rampant. In Kabokweni, Madam Speaker, four people lost their lives months apart, since the beginning of this year, for stamping over underground electricity cables, connected illegally. We call upon our people to stop this. In this financial year, we will join hands with the Department of Security, Safety and Liaison, the South African Police Services (SAPS) and Eskom in stepping up the fight against 'izinyoka-nyoka'.
43. Our law enforcement agencies and the intelligence service have recorded a number of arrests in this regard, and we hope successful prosecution against the suspects will send a strong message that Izinyoka-nyoka have no place in our society anymore.
44. Our efforts to lobby national government for funding additional substations and the upgrading of bulk infrastructure are paying off. The R186.2 million allocated by the Integrated National Electrification programme (INEP) is the outcome of this initiative and will help accelerate electrification of areas without electricity in Mpumalanga.

Madam Speaker, our resolve to contribute to job creation, has not escaped the radar, as one of the five key priorities of the ANC-led administration. We are well on course in our implementation of job creation. In this financial year, we will maintain the number of work opportunities created through the Community Works' Programme (CWP) in fourteen (14) local municipalities, namely: Bushbuckridge, Emalahleni, Govan Mbeki, Mbombela, Msukaligwa, Nkomazi, Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme, Steve Tshwete, Thaba Chweu, Albert Luthuli with 2 sites, Thembisile Hani, Mkhondo and Dr J.S Moroka.

45. Initially, 18 419 work opportunities were created through this programme. We can report to this house that we have exceeded our target as we will be maintaining 19 000 job opportunities in this financial year where in participants cultivate vegetable gardens to provide food to poor families, orphans and those vulnerable in the communities.
46. Madam Speaker, it is common knowledge that the high levels of poverty are concentrated in the rural areas, due to unemployment. Working jointly with the National Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, we have identified five municipalities during the last financial year for the implementation of the Community Works Programme aimed at creating 2000 new jobs in our effort to fight poverty.
47. In each municipality, 400 projects were implemented. The local municipalities are: Lekwa, Umjindi, Emakhazeni, Dipaleseng and Victor Khanye. This intervention is in line with output 3 of outcome 9 of the service delivery agreement. This achievement is significant as it contributes to the national target of creating 1 million job opportunities through the CWP Programme by 2019.

48. Madam Speaker, the implementation of the Youth Waste Management Project is well on course. In this project participants clean open spaces, cemeteries and parks in the targeted Nkomazi and Bushbuckridge Local Municipalities as part of environmental management. They are paid a daily stipend of R85.

49. In this financial year, we will maintain the number of job opportunities created after securing an allocation of R2,6 million from the National Department of Public Works.

### **DISASTER MANAGEMENT**

50. Madam Speaker, Mpumalanga is prone to disasters. Our legislative mandate dictates us to put in place measures to prevent potential disasters. The outbreak of uncontrollable and dangerous veld fires especially in Nkangala and Gert Sibande Districts often pose a serious risk to humans and nature.

51. The need to improve internal capacity cannot be over-emphasized. It is for this reason that we will be paying special attention to the establishment of a Provincial Fire Brigade Services Unit in this financial year to prevent and mitigate the impact of this challenge.

### **MUNICIPAL SUPPORT**

52. Madam Speaker, the department's clean audit goal has been achieved. This is attributed to a high level of commitment demonstrated by the management and officials at all levels. This will improve public perception about the department's efforts in the proper spending of public funds.

53. The implementation of performance agreement system as required by local government legislation, will be our focal point. We have realized that municipalities are constrained to perform fair labour practice where cases of poor performance are detected. Our target in this financial year is to ensure that all Senior Managers in the 21 municipalities sign performance agreements as a ploy to enhance maximum performance.
54. The strength of our municipalities in improving good governance lies in the enforcement of by-laws. We have realized that in some cases the by-laws are obsolete or non-existent. This becomes a breeding ground for poor land use management, maintenance of clean environment, traffic control and other related legislative measures. Incapacity exacerbates the situation. The department, Madam Speaker, has identified 9 municipalities to provide assistance in this financial year for the approval of generic municipal by-laws to improve good governance.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

55. Madam Speaker, our democratic values will be meaningless without the participation of the voters in the activities of the government they voted for. Established public forums at municipal level, such as Ward Committee meetings, IDP and Budget consultation Forums and Mayoral Outreach Programmes serve as the pillars for deepening our democracy.
56. We have noted with serious concern accusations against councilors for failing to attend meetings to report back. We are concern that these accusations give rise to the community protests we are experiencing in Mpumalanga.

57. In this financial year, we will develop a ward level database with community concerns and produce remedial actions. This approach seeks to identify and bridge gaps which often exist between councilors and their constituencies.

58. A functional Response Team to investigate root causes of protests will also be established in this financial year. Our approach is to ensure that a pre and a post plan is developed to mitigate the impact of protests against the delivery of services. We call upon the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), to join hands with us for the realization of this objective.

### **EARLY WARNING SYSTEM**

59. Madam Speaker, our stakeholders often express concern about our reactionary plan when dealing with municipalities that fail to perform according to the set standard. The expression that '***closing the stable when the horse has bolted out***' is often true. The intervention in terms of Section 139 of the Constitution, which we often institute, is a case in point.

60. In this financial year, we have set aside R5 million to install a Local Government Information Management Support (LGIMS). The system will serve as an early warning mechanism in all the 21 municipalities on issues of service delivery and other related legislative mandate. With this system, we should be able to see flashing red lights before hand and provide the necessary support before any municipality is declared an item for the 'ICU'.

## **MUNICIPAL CLEAN AUDIT OUTCOMES**

61. Madam Speaker, the clean audit goal in our municipalities has not been favorable. Only two of our municipalities have achieved clean audits, namely: Ehlanzeni District and Steve Tshwete Local Municipality. We salute the Executive Mayor, Cllr Lettie Shongwe, her council and officials at Ehlanzeni District for a job well done.

We also salute the Executive Mayor of Steve Tshwete Local Municipality, Cllr Mike Masina, his Council and officials for this rare achievement!

62. We will work with the Provincial Department of Treasury in the spirit of the Integrated Municipal Support Plan (IMSP) to provide municipalities with the necessary support for the realization of the clean audits goal. MEC for the Department of Treasury, Hon. Eric Kholwane will elaborate further in this regard.

63. Madam Speaker, our attempt in this regard, may have not produced the desired outcome, however, for us, this attempt has illuminated our desire to work even harder. We are motivated by the great Nelson Mandela, in his best-selling book, **Long Walk to Freedom**. He wrote and I quote: ***"After climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb"***.

## **INTEGRATED MUNICIPAL SUPPORT PLAN (IMSP)**

64. We are a step away to achieve this mammoth task. However, the scope is broad. Pursuant to the objective of building a responsive, accountable and efficient local government system as set out in the National Development Plan we have developed an Integrated Municipal Support Plan (IMSP), approved by the Provincial Executive Council.



65. The plan seeks to support municipalities in order to improve in the following key focus areas: Governance, Financial Management, Public Participation, Institutional and Administrative Capability and Basic Services delivery. Through this plan, the department in conjunction with the Provincial Treasury seeks to accelerate basic service delivery, specifically water and sanitation, facilitate the filling of all critical vacant positions of Municipal Managers and Senior Managers with competent personnel, restore good governance system, and tackle financial management issues in line with the Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA). The plan is informed by the Back-to-Basics national programme developed by Hon. Minister Gordhan.

### **PROPOSED AMALGAMATION OF MUNICIPALITIES**

66. Madam Speaker, the proposed amalgamation of ten (10) municipalities in Mpumalanga is being attended to. The re-determination of these municipalities was submitted to the Municipal Demarcation Board (MDB) by the National Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs in line with Section 26 of the Local Government: Municipal Demarcation Board Act of 1998, with a view to optimize the financial viability of the affected municipalities, namely:

- ***Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme and Msukaligwa.***
- ***Umjindi and Mbombela.***
- ***Emakhazeni and Steve Tshwete.***
- ***Victor Khanye and Emalahleni.***
- ***Lekwa and Dipaleseng.***

67. The Municipal Demarcation Board has already conducted public hearings in the affected municipalities and we commend all the stakeholders for their participation. Written submissions have also been submitted to the board. Views expressed during the public hearings and through written submissions will inform the outcome of the decision to amalgamate or against the amalgamation.
68. We appeal to all communities in the affected municipalities to embrace the outcome of this process, whether it is in their favour or not. We can assure our communities, Madam Speaker, that any decision will be based on expressed views, and that any decision will be in the best interest of our people in the affected municipalities.
69. Madam Speaker, we are inspired by the impact that Thusong Service Centres are making in our communities who had to travel long distances to access government services.
70. In Nkomazi for example, a 62 years old local resident, **Mr Lomashelela Mahlalela** of **Mbuzini**, who had given up hopes of getting a pension, due to a number of reasons, had his dignity restored as a South African. After reporting his frustration to the Mbangwane Thusong Service Centre Manager, **Mr Mike Mabuza**, his case was referred to Home Affairs officials based at the centre, and was subsequently resolved.
71. Today Madam Speaker, Mr Mahlalela is enjoying monthly pension pay outs like all other pensioners in the country. He is here with us and I would like him to stand up so that we can congratulate him.

## CONSTITUTIONAL INTERVENTIONS

### Emalahleni Municipality

72. Madam Speaker, we have a good story to tell in the two municipalities we had instituted an intervention in terms of Section 139(1)(b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, read with section 139(5)(a) of the Constitution and Chapter 13 of the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, (Act. No. 56 of 2003), as approved by EXCO.
73. Emalahleni Municipality had deteriorated to dysfunctional levels, right at the verge of total collapse. None of the provisions as enshrined under Section 152 of the Constitution of the Republic were observed.
74. Scores of reports of serious maladministration, fraud, corruption, dysfunctional oversight, lack of good governance, deteriorating financial management, extremely poor state of service delivery especially on water and sanitation, labour unrests that were on the rise as well as a general state of dissatisfaction by communities that also led to some violent protests.
75. The corrective measures we have undertaken to support in terms of Section 154 of the Constitution as well as other enabling legislations such as the Municipal Systems Act, Municipal Finance Management Act, have removed Emalahleni out of the doldrums.
76. Significant results have been realized. We can report to this house today that the following set targets have been realized as a result of the intervention:
- ***Normalising water supply sufficient capacity to provide water to all residents for more than 95% of the time.***
  - ***Improving water quality in 90% of the time.***

- ***Cleaning more than 10 000 cubic meters of waste in 7 informal settlements and in Hlalanikahle, Vosman and Ackerville.***
- ***Arresting the uncontrolled creditor situation and honouring credit arrangements. Cleaning up of previously undisclosed creditors of R378 million.***
- ***Revenue enhancement plan executed***
- ***20 000 water meters installed.***
- ***7 tons of cables removed and 7 members of the public arrested and cases opened against a further 45 for illegal connections.***
- ***All Section 79 Committees of Council are functional, the Audit Committee is functional and for the first time reports from the Audit Committee have been submitted to Council.***
- ***An Internal Audit Steering Committee has been established to attend to the issues raised by the Auditor General in the recent audit. Section 71 reports are on time.***
- ***Now that the executive powers and functions have been restored, oversight, good governance, enforcing accountability and good leadership shall be put on the radar for all our councillors in Emalahleni. The enforcement of the Code of Conduct for Officials and Councillors is one of our non-negotiables and shall be strictly monitored with active participation of the Department and SALGA.***

77. These achievements cover the period from the commencement of the administration period to the end of March 2015. Madam Speaker, I must indicate that an Acting Municipal Manager has been appointed to provide an after-care support until the vacancy is filled.
78. A lot still need to be done and as he gets down to business, part of his responsibility will be to focus on improving municipal efficiency, consumer billing, waste removal, maintenance of public facilities, etc. We must indicate upfront that inadequate funding remains the main constraint in the rapid roll out of service delivery.
79. R11 billion rand is required to improve road and electricity networks and the municipality does not have the amount. In respect of water, a major challenge has been insufficient water capacity to the Southern and Western suburbs. The team will in the interim be focusing on this body of work to improve the supply.

### **Bushbuckridge Municipality**

80. Madam Speaker, we are satisfied that the intervention in Bushbuckridge has yielded the desired outcomes. A recovery plan was developed and implemented. Part of this was the development of the revenue enhancement strategy that has improved revenue collection in the municipality.

81. The connection of various communities to the water services, as I have indicated earlier, forms part of the service delivery imperative we sought to achieve with this intervention. The municipality is now in a good financial position to meet its financial obligations.
82. All Section 56 vacancies have been filled and performance contracts have been finalized. The position of a Municipal Manager has also been filled to prevent a relapse of the municipality.

### **SUPPORT FOR THE TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP**

83. Madam Speaker, our partnership with the institution of traditional leadership in advancing the socio-economic challenges facing our communities is making a significant impact. We commend Amakhosi/Makgoshi for embracing the call made by Hon. Premier Mabuza to participate in government initiatives aimed at addressing these challenges.
84. We are happy to see that their participation in the fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS in the Gert Sibande District has culminated into a significant drop of cases associated with the disease. Their command of authority on traditional and cultural matters give us hope that this authority will translate into visible solutions as we confront the triple challenges of poverty, violence against women and children and cultural malpractices which lead to deaths, especially in the initiation schools.
85. Madam Speaker, the Hon. Premier has enlarged the scope of our work in partnership with Amakhosi. When he addressed the 1<sup>st</sup> Ordinary sitting of the 3<sup>rd</sup> session of the 6<sup>th</sup> House of Traditional leaders recently, the Hon. Premier outlined the following areas that we must focus on as we work together with traditional leaders:

- ***To promote indigenous knowledge and cultures as well as preserving heritage for future generations.***
- ***To mobilize communities to fight against incidents of gender-based violence and the abuse of vulnerable people.***
- ***To implement the provisions of the Ingoma Act of 2011 to mitigate against the loss of lives of young people in initiation schools.***
- ***To support the programme for rural development and socio-economic upliftment of our people in tribal communities.***
- ***To support programmes aimed at reducing teenage pregnancies.***
- ***To support land use management legislation for upliftment of sustainable development.***

86. Madam Speaker, the effective role of traditional leaders to carry out their mandate, hinges on our support, as premised in the preamble of the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act (No.41 of 2003). The act stipulates the following, and I quote: ***“The State recognizes the need to provide appropriate support and capacity building to the institution of traditional leadership”.***

87. In view of this act, we are exploring sources of funding to replace the current fleet of vehicles that has reached its life span for all 58 Amakhosi and our 2 (two) Izingwenyama. The scope of their work is wide and requires vehicles in good condition as tools of trade, for them to travel to the furthest corners of the rural areas in pursuit of their duties.

88. In this financial year, we will finalize the construction of the four traditional councils, namely: **Moreiputso, Barolong Balefifi, Umjindi and Malele**. Construction has already started and will be completed by the end of this financial year. This body of work is important as these offices will serve their communities by bringing government services in close proximity.
89. We have set for ourselves a target of concluding the refurbishment of the palaces of Ingwenyama Makhosoke II and Ingwenyama Mabhoko III. We are sourcing funding from the Municipal Infrastructure Support Agency that the President has set up to complete this project.
90. In this financial year we will continue to support the capacity building programme for traditional leaders to empower them with requisite skills and competencies to contribute to economic and community development. The focus will be on management, control and leadership.
91. We commend the Gert Sibande District Municipality for similar capacity development initiatives. The District has partnered with the University of KwaZulu-Natal to train Amakhosi in the Gert Sibande District on leadership skills. This training resulted in 10 of Amakhosi obtaining certificates after graduating in a leadership and good governance programme.

## **INITIATION SCHOOLS**

92. Madam Speaker, over the years, our beloved province has been overshadowed by death cases of young boys in the initiation schools. This remains a matter of serious concern. The passage of our young boys to adulthood through the traditional practice of 'ukusoka' should be death-free.
93. People who perform the tradition without following procedure, inevitably cash in money at the expense of our children. As Kgoshi Mokoena describes them, they treat our kids as 'ATMs'.



94. I want to assure this house, Madam Speaker, that such malpractise will soon be a thing of the past. Last year our Premier, Hon. DD Mabuza signed into law the Mpumalanga Ingoma Act of 2011, which regulates the schools.
95. The act gives us enough power to take action against people who use our culture for their selfish gain. Their days are numbered. They cannot escape this time! The Ingoma regulations have been published for public comments.
96. The regulations, Madam Speaker, seek to detail, amongst other things, the form and manner of lodging an appeal against the non-approval of the holding of an Ingoma and the categories and upper limits of fees payable in respect of the attendance of an Ingoma.
97. I must say Madam Speaker that the Ingoma Act is meaningless without the support of Amakhosi, parents and our communities. As we approach the winter season, our desire is to have zero-tolerance of death cases of initiates. One death is way too many. We count on your support in our effort to make the passage of our young boys to adulthood death-free in this season.
98. We appeal to Amakhosi to monitor the schools, to make sure that those who perform this tradition comply with the act. We also appeal to the parents, to check first if the school owners are permitted to operate and that their children are in a good and healthy condition to undergo the initiation process. We will also be monitoring to ensure that boys younger than 16 years of age are not recruited to participate.
99. Madam Speaker, we are at the tail end of the arduous task of resolving disputes and claims for the institution. Last year, I reported in this eminent house that of the 163 lodged claims, 112 claims had been finalized. At the time, 51 claims were outstanding. I am happy to report to the house today that 136 claims have been finalized, which accounts for 84%.

100. With the remaining seven months, I can assure the house that all the 27 outstanding cases would be finalized by the end of December 2015, which marks the end of the term of the Committee on Traditional Leadership Disputes and Claims.
101. Let me take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the Chairperson, Advocate Simon Mahlangu and members of the Committee for the sterling work. We appeal to the affected traditional councils to accept the final outcome of the committee irrespective of whether it is in their favour or not.
102. Madam Speaker, each financial year gives us a fresh start to deal with previous and new challenges. And this new financial year is no exception. As the great **John W Gardner** observed, opportunities to resolve these challenges abound. He remarked, and I quote: ***"We are all faced with a series of great opportunities, brilliantly disguised as unsolvable problems"***.
103. The revolutionary leader of Guinea-Bissau, **Amilcar Cabral**, taught us a profound lesson before he died 43 years ago. He taught us, and I quote: ***"Hide nothing from the masses of our people. Tell no lies. Expose lies whenever they are told. Mask no difficulties, mistakes, failures. Claim no easy victories"***. It is this lesson, Madam Speaker that guide our conscious every time we come to report to this house, the achievements we have made, the challenges we have experienced and the way forward in our effort to make the lives of our people better.

## **CONCLUSION**

104. As I conclude Madam Speaker, let me take this opportunity to thank the Honourable Premier, DD Mabuza, the ANC and its Alliance partners for their guidance and support. Members of the Portfolio Committee on Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs and Human Settlement for their oversight role in this department.

105. My sincere gratitude to the Head of Department, Mr Cain Chunda, Management and staff, whose support has made it easier for me to present these plans and policy imperatives. Their support once again gives credence to my assertion that indeed they are valuable assets to the department. Many thanks to my family, my friends and Comrades for their valuable support.

106. I now have the pleasure to table the budget of the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, and I accordingly request the House to approve the amount of **FOUR HUNDRED AND FOURTY THREE MILLION AND EIGHT HUNDRED AND NINETY EIGHT THOUSAND RAND (R443 898 million)** for the 2015/16 financial year allocated as follows:

**Programme 1: Administration- R111, 771 m**

**Programme 2: Local Governance- R152 978 m**

**Programme 3: Development and Planning- R61 860 m**

**Programme 4: Traditional Institutional Management- R100 811 m**

**Programme 5: House of Traditional Leaders- R16 478 m**

***'Together, we move South Africa forward'.***

***Ngiyathokoza!***