

**SPEECH BY MEC FOR COGTA, HON. R.M MTSHWENI DURING A DEBATE
ABOUT THE PREMIER'S STATE OF THE PROVINCE ADDRESS (SOPA) ON
TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2015 IN EMALAHLENI**

MADAM SPEAKER, HONORABLE BT SHONGWE

Hon DEPUTY SPEAKER,

Hon Premier,

Hon Members of the Executive Council,

ESTEEMED MEMBERS OF THE MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

- 1 Madam Speaker, the Premier, Hon. DD Mabuza must be commended for tabling a thorough State of the Province Address which outlines the plan of action by our provincial government, aimed at addressing the **miriad** of challenges facing our people. The Premier's eloquence in tabling the speech left the doubting thomases of our beloved province with no choice, but to admit that we, as a ruling party, the ANC, are indeed on the right track in our quest to make a better life for all people, a reality.
- 2 The Premier's speech also set the tone that indeed we remain committed to change the course of lives for our masses in pursuit of the ideals set out in the Freedom Charter, that we are enjoined today to celebrate its progressive Anniversary from its original adoption since 1955 in Kliptown. Indeed as the Honourable Premier had clearly said, our task to realize the objectives of the National Democratic Revolution are underway.
- 3 Madam Speaker, the provision of Basic Services especially Water is one of the key provisions in Chapter 2 of our Constitution, enshrined as the Bill of Rights. We stand here with glowing pride that this ANC Government continues to live by its promises and has continued to pursue a better quality of life for all. The **R2,7 billion** investment in the current financial year on water projects, is one of the bold steps ever that shall ensure that there is undoubtedly an increased number of people with access to water by December 2015. All spheres working together right from the Province, the national and to local government have heeded this clarion call to work together in realizing this.

- 4 Judging from our accelerated pace of an additional **15 151** households that we have already connected to access water services in this current financial year alone, is in itself one of the basis for our determination. This work accounts for the total reduction of the water backlog by **31%** from **48 528 by end of 2013 to 33 377 by the end of 2014** which is a clear Writing on the Wall, Madam Speaker that victory is certain for universal access to water for all our people by this Year in line with the clarion call by our Honourable Premier. I must say we are **refreshed, poised and confident** to carry out this mandate. We are excitedly looking forward as part of this machinery, a Team of vibrant men and women that seeks to confidently achieve this worthy and practical Goal led by our Honourable Premier.
- 5 Madam Speaker, this honourable House would recall that just here in Emalahleni, the provision of Water services was such a nightmare. Challenges such as intermittent or at times no supply at all, poor water quality, dark and scary water coming from the taps and most importantly, the Witbank Water Treatment Works (WTW) that was not able to meet the potable water requirements of the town and the surrounding communities such as Ogies and Phola due to the demand exceeding the supply.
- 6 Today we can proudly announce that 2 phases of the 3 Phases of our work has already been completed. In attesting to the pronouncements of the honourable Premier in the previous years and again in line with the current SOPA, Madam Speaker, I am pleased to record the following progress just for Emalahleni Municipality as we need to be practical about our delivery:

PHASE I Intervention Progress for the Period 2011-12

The following was delivered under Phase I of the project:

- Refurbishment of the Dosing System and the automation thereof at the Witbank Water Treatment Works
- The Turbo Clarifiers and Candy Clarifiers were fully refurbished.
- The Chlorination System was upgraded and the Backwash System fully refurbished
- Point A, B, C, D, E as well as Phola and Ogies Pump Stations were all refurbished including the Waste Water Recovery Pump Station.

- Furthermore, the Repairs to all Major Leaks on the Bulk Network were conducted during Phase 1 in the 2011/12 financial year.

PHASE II Intervention Progress for the Period 2012-13

- Re-Construction of Two (2) Filters and the Re-Design of the Water Quarry System
 - Upgrade of the Pipeline from the Waste Water Recovery Pump Station to the Witbank Water Treatment Works
 - AC Pipe Replacement for Extension 41 and the Installation of Pump and Motor Assembly at the Backwash System. Automation of the Lime Dosing System and the Development of O&M Manuals for the Witbank Water Treatment Works
 - Optimisation of the Water Treatment Process, Development of the Asset Register for Bulk Infrastructure, Water Demand Management Analysis for Bulk Infrastructure and the Implementation of Readiness Study.
- More than R300m has been invested to date to bring about the visible improvements with water services in general.

- 7 We didn't end there Madam Speaker. We have spent **R298 million** in the Bushbuckridge Municipality to connect 24 villages, benefitting **15 000** households. Those communities are today in appreciation of the interventions we have made. The Premier's speech serves as an impetus that the provision of water to all other villages is possible, because already villages in their vicinity now enjoy access to water.
- 8 Madam Speaker, these water interventions, including the 9 Steel Reservoirs commissioned in the critical areas of Phola, Matsulu and KaShabalala in Mbombela, Mangweni and Steenbok in Nkomazi and Casteel, Cunningmore and Thusanong in Bushbuckridge, will further augment the capacity of water supply, as these reservoirs are each providing about 2 Mega-Litres of water for those local communities.
- 9 The Hon Premier must be commended for providing leadership in this body of work, aimed at ensuring that Mpumalanga contributes significantly to the national milestone targets of the NDP and the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals, aimed at reducing by half, the number of people without water by 2015. The Universal Access to water is our golden target.

- 10 Madam Speaker, we look forward to the establishment of a Mining Forum, announced by the Hon Premier in the SOPA, as one of the key levers for the implementation of the Mining Lekgotla which took place in 2012. Indeed our communities living in the vicinity of the mines are still subjected to poor and skualid conditions. As we may have recognized, mining and fast growing towns require our undivided attention in ensuring that the sudden growth in the population located in municipalities like Emalahleni, Victor Khanye, Govan Mbeki and Steve Tshwete due to the influx of people seeking better economic opportunities has indeed posed numerous challenges for properly planned and better serviced human settlements.
- 11 We therefore shall endeavour to ensure that basic services are a key aspect as a basic human right irrespective of wherever in the Province our people are settled. This shall be supported as one of the Premier's non-negotiables where the mines shall also be drawn in to continue in playing their part.
- 12 Positive contributions from the mines that have been recorded for Emalahleni Municipality, just to cite practical and closest examples include the following:
- The purchase of a refuse removal truck for Ga-Nala by the Matla Mine in Emalahleni.
 - The repairing of pot holes and the donation of two bakkies and a traffic vehicle by the Kriel Mine for Ogies.
 - The repairing of the KwaGuqa substation by Anglo Coal Mine and their donation of 20 bakkies, a crane truck and a TLB. The company further donated 2 refuse removal trucks and cleaning equipment for waste water treatment truck for Ogies.
 - BHP Billiton constructed a multi-purpose community hall. Further support included a Learnership and Teacher Support programme, Community Scholarship Scheme which are some of the Programmes supported by both BHP Billiton and Anglo Coal Mine.
 - Glenmore Mine has built a clinic and a Thusong Service Centre in Thubelihle and Klarinet, respectively.
- 13 With the establishment of the Mining Forum, we believe Madam Speaker that the Honourable Premier is on the right track and we therefore take guidance from his pronouncements on his State of the Province Address. Truth be told, more can be done to improve the socio-economic conditions of our people if we enlist the support from our partners such as the mines. They are crucial for places like Emalahleni.

14 In conclusion Madam Speaker, This ANC Government under the capable leadership of the Hon Premier in the Province shall deliver on the key basic aspects and expectations of our people. Yes, we may encounter challenges and obstacles alongside but this will in no way obstruct us from our well calculated goals of making our people's lives better than yesterday. A Better Life for All is certainly within our Reach!!!

I thank you.