



GAUTENG PROVINCE

CO-OPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND
TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

STATEMENT BY GAUTENG MEC FOR HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, URBAN PLANNING, COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS LEBOGANG MAILE ON THE ELECTRICITY AND WATER CRISIS IN THE PROVINCE AND STATE OF READINESS FOR VOTER REGISTRATION.

As part of ongoing engagements in order to resolve critical service delivery issues, over the course of this week, extensive engagements were conducted with Eskom, mayors of municipalities and the relevant water entities; to attend to the water and electricity crisis that has beset the province.

Over the last two decades, Gauteng's population has grown in leaps and bounds; and that has had a serious impact on poor air quality, insufficient water and electricity supply as well as waste management.

The point to make is that urbanisation is positively correlated with growing incomes and human development indicators. As we have been engaging municipalities, Eskom, Rand Water and other relevant stakeholders, it has become even clearer to us that urbanisation has a direct bearing on the supply of water and electricity in our province.

The water and electricity we are faced with in Gauteng, owes its existence to many factors: ageing infrastructure, rapid urbanisation and in-migration in Gauteng which puts greater pressure on limited infrastructure, infrastructure maintenance gaps and the massive funding required to upgrade and replenish bulk infrastructure necessary to ensure a constant and consistent source of water and electricity to the people of Gauteng.

Just to give an indication of the immensity of the funding gap and the monstrosity of the task we are faced with in order to fix substations, transformers and other bulk infrastructure

that is critical for stabilising electricity supply in the province: in Rand West City municipality, we need an amount of R1.747 billion, for Emfuleni the figure is R1.752 billion, Mogale City R731 million, Merafong R296 million, and all this over a three-to-five-year period.

From just looking at these few municipalities in the province and the amounts required to fix bulk issues that negatively impact on electricity supply, one can easily get an appreciation of the fact that the solutions are not going to be overnight, even though government has been trying to find some interim measures to relieve stress on aggrieved consumers, citizens of our beautiful province.

The water and electricity supply crisis in the province has seen many communities subjected to random, unscheduled power cuts, with some communities being without electricity for months and limited or no water supply for unacceptably long. All these undesirable outages compromise the overall well-being, safety, and dignity of the people of Gauteng.

These are some of the few impacted areas that formed part of the deliberations:

- Khutsong North – two transformers are not working
- Bekkersdal – the electrification of homes is not yet complete.
- Jacobs dry area – electricity provision has been reduced, even though the community is paying for their services.
- Eikenhof substation has aged infrastructure that keeps tripping. This substation supplies electricity to three water reservoirs.
- Klipriversberg reservoir has 26% capacity, which creates serious supply challenges.
- Naledi and Emndeni– residents have had no electricity for three months. This has sparked community protests that led to the torching of a Rea Vaya bus.
- The City of Ekurhuleni is faced with sinkhole challenges, with the sewage system having collapsed in the South areas.

- Mogale City Local Municipality is plagued with illegal connections, land invasion on mining areas and four broken transformers responsible for electricity to four areas.

Some of these problems are caused by system overload due to illegal connections, which results in damage and failure of critical equipment such as transformers and mini substations. It is for this reason that our communities must desist from the now common habit of allowing illegal connections within their yards, as it is them who suffer in the end when transformers burst and Eskom refuses to replace them without first conducting audits.

This leads to lengthy periods of communities not having electricity supply and is often exacerbated by angry community members preventing Eskom staff from conducting the audits. Eskom`s load reduction in high density areas during peak hours **(5:00 - 10:00 am)** and **(17:00 -22:00 pm)** is implemented in areas where there is meter bypassing, ghost vendors, illegal connections, and cable theft, so again, it is to the benefit of communities in our province to desist from all these practices if they want to have stable, consistent electricity supply.

The discussions resolved on the following:

- Provincial government to convene an urgent meeting with the Ministers of CoGTA, Finance, Public Enterprises, Mayors, and the relevant entities; in order to find immediate, medium term and long-term solutions
- Principal among these discussions would be Eskom`s stipulated demand to be paid by municipalities within a 15-day period.
- Eskom requires payment according to the supply agreement within 15 days of invoice. Municipalities can only bill and collect up to 60 days later. This creates massive cash flow problems for municipalities. There is a need for supply agreements to be realigned to payment 30 days after invoice, as stipulated in the MFMA.
- Municipalities located in areas supplied by Eskom, who so happen to have some extra capacity such as the City of Johannesburg, have tentatively entered into a payment/trade exchange agreement with Eskom in order to try resolve some of

these problems in the interim where possible. Eskom will reimburse these municipalities either through reducing their debt or through direct reimbursement.

- Municipalities were compelled to explore the different grants received from National Treasury and ascertain whether some of these grants can be diverted to addressing other problems such as sinkholes and other water related challenges.
- On criminal activities, such as bridging and illegal connections –the collective was tasked to forge a way that would see to those who enable the perpetuation of these crimes being punished
- Municipalities were urged to cultivate among citizens, a culture of paying for services and respecting the rule of law.

Yesterday a status update meeting was held between the provincial government and the IEC in order to discuss Gauteng's state of readiness for the upcoming voter registration weekend whose objectives are the following:

- Enable new eligible voters to register
- Allow already registered voters to amend personal details and voter locations
- Allow registered voters whose address details are not on the voters' roll to provide this information.
- Registered voters can also access the online facility to register or check and update their address details.
- Voting stations will officially be opened from **08:00 to 17:00** on both days.

However, if there are still voters in the queues at closing time, the IEC has committed that these voters will first be attended. Gauteng has 2 815 Voting stations, including 271 temporary Voting stations. Elected public representatives (MPs, MPLs, MECs and Councillors) will be deployed across the 850 voting stations and 272 temporary voting stations to do oversight and monitoring in the province.

As the Gauteng Provincial Government, we are satisfied with the IEC's state of readiness and wish to take this opportunity to urge the residents of Gauteng to go out in their numbers to check their registration status or register to vote. We have been doing our

utmost to ensure that we create a conducive environment for local government elections to be held successfully during this period of Covid-19, with our mass vaccination programme, civic education outreaches and voter education drives.

Local Government is the heart-bed of service delivery for communities and these elections provide an opportunity for individuals and communities to take matters into their own hands, through the power of the ballot box.

Ends.

For further enquires.

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