

SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE CLUSTER POST-SOPA BRIEFING BY MEC LBOGANG MAILE

10 March 2020

MECs

HODs

Members of the media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank you for joining us this morning for the post-State of the Province (SoPA) cluster media briefing. This morning we are detailing progress made by provincial government through this Social and Governance Cluster, specifically on matters related to the portfolio of Human Settlements, Urban Planning and CoGTA, and providing more details on the plans announced by Premier David Makhura during the recent SoPA.

As Premier Makhura indicated, the SoPA was not merely a speech, but a Plan of Action (PoA) to galvanize the energy and creativity of all sectors of society to take specific actions towards the realization of the Gauteng of our dreams. Even though we have made significant strides in improving the lives of the people of Gauteng, as Gauteng City Region Quality of Life surveys continuously show, our province still faces a number of service delivery challenges, owing to our strategic location as the economic powerhouse and destination of choice for social, educational and economic opportunities.

Through this media briefing we will outline work we have undertaken and some achievements thus far. This has not been an easy task, given the magnitude of the challenges we have had to confront, in a systematic manner, in order to improve service delivery. We will give you detail of some of the work done, within our portfolio, namely Human Settlements and Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs.

During the SoPA, Premier Makhura identified seven priorities that the 6th administration would focus on, during its term in office:

- 1. Economy, Jobs and Infrastructure**
- 2. Education, Skills and Healthcare**
- 3. Sustainable Human Settlements, New Cities and Land Release**
- 4. Safety, Social Cohesion and Food Security**
- 5. Sustainable Future for All**
- 6. Building a Capable, Ethical and Developmental State**
- 7. Building a Better Africa and Better World.**

Human Settlements:

The Department has been an underperformer for too long, given the rising housing demand, as one of the critical service delivery expectations of the people of Gauteng. This poses an immense burden on us to act decisively in order to turn things around and position the department to be able to respond to the expectations of the populace, optimally utilising limited resources in a very tough economic environment to achieve our objectives. Since coming into office, we have undertaken the following measures to turn things around and create an organisation of service delivery excellence with regards to our core mandate, which is housing delivery. It would not be an exaggeration to state that, what we are busy with at Human Settlements, is the process of change management and process re-engineering for accelerated delivery of housing units.

- We have appointed a new Head of Department (HOD), Ms Phindile Mbanjwa, who is not new to public service having been in public administration for more than 15 years. She has a track record of turning things around and bringing about stability and leadership to any organisation she leads, having delivered consistent clean audits for the Gauteng Department of Economic Development and its many entities, in her previous capacity as HOD there.
- We have suspended and dismissed two senior officials for wrong-doing based on incompetence and corruption related charges and are busy with the tedious but necessary process of implementing consequence management at every level of the organisation, in order to change the organisational culture at Human Settlements, which has lagged behind other departments in the province for an unacceptably long time.
- A new strategy is being developed, along with a Human Settlements Masterplan, with a project bank that has a project matrix, which will help us

deal with housing delivery bottlenecks across the entire province, working with municipalities to coordinate and collate all developments within Gauteng City Region, in a manner that will enable us to accelerate delivery of houses as all spheres of government and relevant stakeholders work in unison to bring this about. This has also necessitated the creation of a new structure, in order to better position the department to deliver on its mandate.

- We are working meticulously in order to turn our negative audit outcomes around and to date have resolved sixty-four of the Auditor General's hundred and five outcomes, with the main challenge being the lack of documented info for the one's we haven't yet resolved. Our documents and records management challenge is being addressed through a facility given to us by the Gauteng Department of Sports, Arts, Culture and Recreation and going forward we will be automating and modernising our record management system, so that such unacceptable things such as loss of information and documentation never happens again in this department.
- We have met with all contractors to solicit an understanding of their challenges and called on them to deliver on their contractual obligations as well as finish all incomplete houses, so that we fast-track housing delivery. Failing that, we are looking at each contract on an individual basis and have firmly warned our contractors that we will not hesitate to cancel contracts for underperformance, whatever the excuses may be.
- We are putting in place new systems to improve our beneficiary management, so that we can give houses to qualifying beneficiaries speedily and have met with our municipalities to try and remove all unnecessary barriers to township proclamation, one of the critical bottle-necks to title deeds issuance. We have also appointed a service provider to work with the Deeds Office and our municipalities to tackle all bottlenecks to title deeds registration and issuance.
- We have re-prioritised the improvement and renovations of hostels, and necessary funds have been set aside;
- A multi-disciplinary, interdepartmental, intergovernmental counter land invasion strategy has been adopted to respond adequately to the unwanted problem of illegal land invasion and one of the things we are doing through the courts, is looking to get a blanket court order on all land identified for development in the province, so that we can immediately evict any illegal land invaders.

- Urban Renewal Projects (URP) have been revived for the areas of Evaton, Winterveldt, Alexandra, Kliptown and Bekkersdal. There is work already going on through various provincial departments in all these areas, and we have managed to put together a technical team with representation from each department, so that we can implement urban renewal in a holistic manner, in each of these areas.
- We have delivered more than 9886 housing units to deserving beneficiaries, but through the work that we are doing to turn the department around, we believe that we will be able to more than double that number, as a new ethos and culture permeates the department.
- 10 000 fully serviced stands will be released by April as per the Premier's SoPA commitment, for those who are ready to build houses for themselves. One of the exciting initiatives we are introducing in this regard, will be our Ikageleng programme, partnering with stokvels and cooperatives to give them serviced stand so that they can build houses for their members. We will be piloting this through an incredibly community initiative in Muldersdrift and Zandspruit, which we will be visiting on Sunday 22 March and would like you to all be there to observe and report on, as it has the potential to be a game-changer for housing delivery, not just for Gauteng, but for the country as a whole.
- We have 16 multi-year Mega Human Settlements projects under construction, spread across the province and are working in project teams with other relevant departments to ensure that all the amenities that make up the mega project vision are in place, so that we can spatially transform our city region.

CoGTA:

Local government is the epicentre of service delivery, hence the need to continuously strengthen and provide support to all eleven municipalities within GCR. Our core focus as CoGta, is to ensure that all our municipalities deliver on their obligations to citizens, delivering basic services such water and sanitation, electricity, refuse collection and bringing about financial stability and viability of our municipalities through enhanced revenue collection, as these services are being delivered to communities.

We have taken the following steps in supporting and strengthening our municipalities:

- We have appointed a Committee of Inquiry to look into and investigate allegations of corruption and maladministration in all our municipalities. The Committee has done a sterling job in this regard and has basically been to all the municipalities in the province, bar the metros. We have to extend the timeframes for this Committee beyond the three months initially announced, as there has been so much to look into, but the work of the Committee is in its final stages and we will be calling the press to report on its findings very soon. We have firmly stated that stern action will be taken against all officials and political heads who are implicated in corrupt activity and maladministration, from the Committee's findings, even to the point of recommending criminal prosecution if needs be. The Committee has also been tasked with making recommendations about how we can change things in how our municipalities operate, so that we can enhance service delivery in the province.
- We have met with the Mayors of almost all our municipalities in order to deal with issues of governance, service delivery, finance, revenue collection, infrastructure maintenance and refuse collection. From these meetings, we have put together action plans with clear time frames for addressing identified issues and teams from CoGTA assigned to each municipality, so that they can give monthly reports of progress made.
- We convened a meeting with Eskom and all municipalities to deal with issues of electrification and securing reliable energy supply for the province and have set up a technical team with Eskom and the various municipalities that will tackle all problems related to electricity and energy supply.
- We are also working together with Rand Water and Eskom to deal with the problem of rising municipal debt to these entities and create a sustainable payment option so that the issue of municipal debt can be addressed conclusively. Part of this includes running a campaign to conscientize big business and communities to pay for water and electricity bills, which is one of the biggest risks to municipal financial sustainability in the province.

- We will be convening a provincial water summit within the next month, to ensure water security for our city region and put together a water security strategy, in conjunction with our municipalities and all relevant stakeholders.
- We continue to provide support to Emfuleni Municipality, as part of our intervention and are working on an action plan, that if successful, will ensure that we can take the municipality out of that intervention by the middle of this year.
- We have secured funds from Treasury for fire and rescue services for Lesedi Municipality and West Rand District Municipality, an area that is of concern to us, not just with these municipalities, but with other municipalities as part of building disaster preparedness and resilience within GCR.
- As you now well know, we have invoked Section 139 (1) (c) on the City of Tshwane and placed it under administration, as a result of governance, leadership and service delivery challenges. To this effect, as per our constitutional obligations we have written to the National Council of Provinces, national CoGTA and Gauteng legislature and are already at work to turn the municipality around. We met with the senior managers of the municipality over the weekend, imploring them to work with us to turn things around. Provincial Exco will be deployed to engage with each of the communities of Tshwane tomorrow, to explain the decision and give a way forward for returning the City of Tshwane to stability and normalcy and address urgent service delivery issues that have led to Tshwane citizens living in undignified conditions, such as water quality, relocation of Mamelodi flood victims etc.

In conclusion, we are working tirelessly to improve service delivery in the province, to accelerate housing delivery, to hand out title deeds, to deal with housing allocation issues and to ensure that the people of Gauteng can progressively experience better living conditions and quality of life.

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