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MEDIA RELEASE

MEC JACOB MAMABOLO PRESENTED THE GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS 2024/25 BUDGET

The Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) has reaffirmed its commitment to securing energy and water supply, revitalising central business districts, ensuring high-quality project delivery within budget and on time, and setting municipalities on a sustainable path.

In his 2024/25 Budget Vote speech, the MEC for Infrastructure Development and COGTA, Jacob Mamabolo, announced a budget allocation of R1 billion for the 2024/25 financial year and R2.3 billion over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF).

“These vital funds will bolster our ongoing initiatives, particularly our comprehensive and strategic response to the energy crisis, in collaboration with the national energy committee, local governments, and distinguished energy experts,” remarked MEC Mamabolo.

Water Security and Sewer Spillages

COGTA is dedicated to addressing water supply challenges and has already conducted a site inspection of the Vaal River water system. The Department will collaborate with the National Department of Water and Sanitation, municipalities, and Rand Water to tackle these issues.

“We are pleased to announce the establishment of the Provincial Intergovernmental Relations Forum on Water Supply. We will conduct oversight visits and roadshows to municipalities to foster cooperation in ensuring water security for our people,” said MEC Mamabolo.

To address sewage spillages and water leaks in Gauteng, COGTA is finalising a Memorandum of Understanding for the Rand West Local Municipality to be appointed as the implementing agent on behalf of the Gauteng Provincial Government. As the implementing agent, the Municipality will manage all sewer networks, including unblocking sewer distribution networks, designing, constructing, and maintaining sewer infrastructure across Gauteng.

Energy Security and Crisis Response

Due to the severe impact of load-shedding on South Africa's economy, a State of National Disaster was declared, enabling government intervention. In 2023/24, the Gauteng Department of Cooperative Governance executed a R440 million project, installing transformers, smart meters, and solar masts across five municipalities, and upgrading key facilities. For 2024/25, R430 million has been allocated to enhance energy infrastructure and explore alternative solutions to mitigate load-shedding and improve residents' quality of life.

Municipal Infrastructure, Disaster Management, and IDP Coordination

The department is responsible for provincial disaster management coordination, ensuring municipalities are prepared for any eventuality, in line with applicable legislation and best practices. R53 million has been allocated for provincial infrastructure coordination.

The department also supports municipalities in preparing and reviewing Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), ensuring compliance with standards, providing uniform guidelines, consulting stakeholders, and ensuring synergy between sector departments and municipalities. R31 million has been allocated for IDP coordination.

Public Participation

The department has successfully implemented programmes promoting public participation and integrating the three spheres of government with communities. The Asset-Based Community Development Model (ABCD), launched in Ekurhuleni, continues to be implemented across Gauteng. The Civic Education Community Ambassadors Corps, which aids voter registration and civic awareness, has been successful. In light of significant changes in the 7th Administration, increased public participation is crucial. To achieve these objectives, R199 million has been allocated for public participation.

Support for Municipalities, Monitoring, and Evaluation

The state of our municipalities presents ongoing challenges. The department is diligently assessing the impact of support provided to improve municipal status. In line with our Constitutional mandate, we provide comprehensive support in administration, finance, governance, and capacity building. Support packages address financial management challenges under Section 154 of the Constitution. The department, along with the Gauteng Provincial Treasury (GPT), facilitates government debt processes, addresses debt disputes, and engages with Eskom for amicable solutions to overdue municipal debts. R77 million has been allocated for municipal support, monitoring, and evaluation. Additionally, both departments assist with facilitating Eskom's financial relief plans for struggling municipalities.

Municipal Viability Assessments and Strategy Development

Gauteng COGTA will conduct municipal viability assessments and strategy development for all Gauteng municipalities. The support initiative will focus on:

- Conducting due diligence assessments to determine the financial viability, institutional capacity, and development of municipalities and their impact on legislative and development mandates and obligations.
- Developing strategies based on the challenges highlighted in the assessment. The strategy will focus on the performance and capacity of the municipalities in the same areas as per the assessment.

Traditional Institutional Management

Cultural heritage is integral to our social fabric. The department supports traditional leadership institutions and implements policies, norms, standards, and regulatory frameworks for Traditional Affairs. The Commission on Traditional Leadership continues to address rightful leadership issues. Addressing challenges in initiation schools is crucial for safety and rights protection. R20 million has been allocated for traditional institutional management.

Revitalisation of Central Business Districts (CBDs)

The seventh administration prioritises revitalising Central Business Districts (CBDs). These areas face challenges including limited economic activity, poor waste management, high crime rates, neglected buildings, inadequate infrastructure maintenance, and social issues. We aim to transform CBDs into 24-hour, smart, safe, inclusive, resilient, and vibrant spaces.

A comprehensive strategy, in partnership with municipalities and other provincial departments, will guide this revitalisation. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with JoziMyJozi, including institutions such as Anglo American, major banks, and Microsoft, and a forthcoming Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with Pikitup, will help implement a comprehensive programme to clean Johannesburg's CBD.

MEC Mamabolo emphasised the importance of collaboration between civil society, government, and the private sector in transforming Gauteng's CBDs into vibrant, inclusive spaces. He concluded with a call to action, urging all stakeholders to join efforts in creating a prosperous future for the province.

"Through this budget, we recommit ourselves to getting the basics right. This means securing energy and water supply, revitalising our central business districts, delivering projects at the right quality, within cost and on time, and setting our municipalities on a more sustainable path," concluded MEC Mamabolo.

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Issued by the Gauteng Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs