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Mpumalanga Provincial Government



MpumalangaGov

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## Mpumalanga's COVID-19 journey from hard lockdown to level 1

**C**COVID-19 is a pandemic that has been spreading across the globe since last year December. As the disease has been spreading at alarming levels World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 an international emergency and galvanised countries to take precautions. To protect the South African public from the virus and manage infections the President Mr Cyril Ramaphosa took emergency measure by placing the country under lockdown.

The Mpumalanga Province reported its first case on the 11th of March 2020. As a response to the pandemic the Government established Outbreak Response Teams in all districts and Sub-districts and established a provincial structure to coordinate the outbreaks. The province prepared 4 930 hospital beds in the public sector; of these 47 are ICU beds and 23 are high-care beds. The Province has 130 ventilators and procured 250 more ventilators. There are 2 103 usable beds in the private hospitals which includes 207 ICU beds and 89 high care beds.

- Total of beds (Private and Public) – 7 033
- ICU beds 254 (Private and Public)
- 112 High Care beds (Private and Public)

- The Department of Health working together with the DPWRT identified additional structures that can be used to add on the number of beds should a need arise, as a province.
- The Department of Health trained all frontline workers on how to handle outbreaks of the virus in their facilities.
- Appointed 6 159 Community Health Workers who were conducting door to door community screening and testing
- Contracted 501 Nursing Assistants that were unemployed.
- Established Flu Clinics where all patients presenting with flu like symptoms are assessed and tested for COVID-19 separately from the rest of the patients, all the areas where Flu Clinics are conducted are being decontaminated on a daily basis to ensure that there is no spread of the virus.
- Encouraged all our Health care workers to be vaccinated against the influenza virus and are offering it to all our health care workers in all our facilities. They are our front line workers and we needed them to be protected in order to

overcome this pandemic. We also prioritised the elderly and immunocompromised patients for the flu vaccines.

The province received a total of 13 (thirteen) Cuban Professionals on the 19th May 2020.

As the Lockdown regulations were eased from level 5 to 1, the MEC for Health, Ms Sasekani Manzini has been traveling across the province visiting different sectors of the economy, where she has been checking if the Companies are observing the Lockdown Regulations and not putting the lives or their employees and their clients in danger.

The province recorded its first COVID-19 related death case on the 26 May 2020. The province has recorded 592 deaths, 28815 positive cases, 27534 recoveries, 690 active cases, screened 8679 928. Meanwhile, the province continues to maintain active cases, to ensure that the momentum of fighting this pandemic is not lost members of the public are warned against being careless about precautions. This means frequent hand washing, social distancing, wearing masks when out in public and avoiding congregating in large gatherings is crucial and should be adhered to at all times.

# CORONAVIRUS

#COVID-19

Hotline: 0800 029 999

Precautions:



1 Wash your hands with soap for 20 seconds



2 Cough or sneeze into a tissue or your elbow



3 Avoid close contact with people who are sick



# Mpumalanga hospitals received state of the art thermo scanners to fight COVID-19

**G**ijima Technologies donated thermo scanners at Rob Ferreira Hospital that will help the Department of Health to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and to ensure protection and safety of health workers and patients in health care facilities in the Mpumalanga Province. The donations which were received by the MEC for Health Ms. Sasekani Manzini are part of the commitment between government and the private sector to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. MEC Manzini appreciated the commitment from the private sector. “We appreciate the major support we’ve received since the start of the outbreak, from Organized Labor, Private sector, Religious leaders, Traditional leaders, and our Health partners” she said. She said that the department has made incredible progress across health outcomes and life expectancy amidst COVID-19 and thanked all dedicated health workers for remaining resilient and for also ensuring that adequate health care services are delivered on a daily basis to the people. “The thermo scanners will do a great job by adding to the already available Personal Protective Equipment for health workers and assist in fever screening” she concluded.



## COVID-19 PREVENTION ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Wash your hands with soap and water for **20 seconds** or use a 60% or more alcohol-based hand rub often **throughout the day**



Wash your hands at these **5 KEY MOMENTS** FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT:

**1**



Before going on public transport

**2**



After touching doors, handrails and money

**3**



After making contact with other people

**4**



Before touching your eyes, nose and mouth

**5**



When you arrive at your destination

Credit: NICD

# COGTA obtains seventh clean audit

The Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs' (COGTA) determination to achieve a clean audit for the seventh (7th) time has yielded positive results. The Auditor-General (A-G), an independent auditing institution for the public sector has given COGTA a clean audit for the 2019-20 financial year.

The MEC for COGTA in Mpumalanga, Mr Mandla Msibi says the achievement signifies the high level of commitment by the Department to comply with legal prescripts provided for in the management of public funds. "This achievement is an expression of our commitment to comply with the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), Treasury Regulations and legal prescripts in the management of public funds," he explained.

Effective internal controls, according to Mr Msibi, are a recipe for a clean audit outcome. He says COGTA pays attention to this aspect in the beginning of every financial year as a building block for the clean audit achievement. "The clean audit achievement is an outcome of sound financial and performance management, effective risk management and audit committees, effective internal audit, IT Governance and the implementation of sound decisions. Through this seventh clean audit, our Department has positioned itself as a public institution with a reputation for the proper spending of the public purse," he explained.

Mr Msibi credited the management and officials of the Department for the achievement, dedicated it to the late Chief Financial Officer, Mr Sibusiso Matsebula, who passed away in July 2020. "Without your contribution this achievement could not be possible. Our next challenge is to sustain this achievement as a legacy that Mr Matsebula has built over the years. By treating every day as an audit day, we will be able to keep this legacy alive," Mr Msibi reckoned.



**LEGACY:** MEC Msibi attributed the clean audit achievement to the management and all officials of the Department.

## NCOP committee's fact finding mission in three local municipalities



**Changing Local Government gears:** Mr China Dodovu of the NCOP reflecting on the outcome of the sitting with MEC Msibi and Acting HOD, Mr Ngubane at the end of the sitting in Thaba Chweu.

The oversight Committee of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) visited Mpumalanga for an assessment of performance in three local municipalities.

Chairperson of the Select Committee on Co-operative Governance and Traditional Leaders, Mr China Dodovu led members to the Govan Mbeki, Thaba Chweu and Dr JS Moroka Local Municipalities. COGTA MEC Mandla Msibi, accompanied by the HOD and Chief Directors, attended the visits, including representatives of the Provincial Portfolio Committee for COGTA and the South African Local Government Association (SALGA). The Executive Mayors of the municipalities were amongst those scheduled to address the Committee.

The financial status of the municipalities, governance, audit outcomes and service delivery matters were amongst the key issues that the Committee focused on during the visit. The role of COGTA and SALGA also

came under sharp focus as the Committee analysed support mechanism to address challenges faced by the municipalities.

Mr Dodovu cited non compliance to legislation, lack of consequence management, failure to adhere to payment plans amongst the contributing factors that caused the municipalities to slip into the challenges. "We observed the tendency to ignore legislation in the municipality. We also noted that the municipality has failed to submit financial statements to the Auditor-General (A-G). The Eskom debt escalated into millions of Rands. This is a serious cause for concern. And the question is where was the leadership when all these occurred," Mr Dodovu asked during the sitting in Govan Mbeki Municipality.

COGTA briefed the committee about the decision to invoke Section 106 of the Constitution last year as an intervention to deal with allegations of maladministration and as a measure for clean

governance in Govan Mbeki. Plans are afoot to table the findings to the Council. The Committee was also briefed about the suspension of the Municipal Manager as a consequence management.

In Thaba Chweu, the Committee expressed concern about the municipality's inability to improve the state of the roads and the relapse in the audit outcomes. "We have noted the service delivery protests here.

The roads are in dire straits and this will chase away potential investors, that the municipality need to improve the economic status. This municipality is one of the tourists destinations, however, if you fail to improve the road infrastructure, tourists will go elsewhere to save their vehicles," Mr Dodovu said. MEC Msibi told the Committee about the steps being taken to address financial mismanagement in all municipalities, including Thaba Chweu. "We have adopted a zero tolerance towards Unauthorized, Irregular, Fruitless and Wasteful expenditure (UIFW). We have turned down requests for condonation of the expenditure. We are demanding accountability where the UIFW has occurred," Mr Msibi said.

The Committee urged COGTA to assist the municipality with debt collection by engaging Provincial Departments to pay for services owed to the municipality, as part of revenue collection. This, according to the committee, will cushion the municipality against the increasing Eskom debt. The Committee noted the acrimonious relationship between the municipality and a Chinese company over the control of an electricity sub-station that contribute supply power to the municipality. The municipality was directed to resolve the matter rapidly as a solution for electricity challenges.

In Dr JS Moroka, the Committee sounded the alarm about the dire financial straits of the municipality and the safety concerns that resulted in the A-G not performing audit duties. "This municipality will collapse totally if no urgent action is taken to support it. Whoever owes the municipality, must pay. This will address the delay in the payment for services, that are severely affected by this. The poor economic conditions here will perpetuate crime. The audit outcomes are not inspiring. COGTA must extend the Administration period, as a Constitutional imperative set out in Section 139," Mr Dodovu emphasized.



## Massive budget to revitalize mining towns

The Mpumalanga Department of Human Settlements has set at the apex of its priorities the revitalization of mining towns during the 2020/21 financial year. These priorities were pronounced by MEC, Ms. Norah Mahlangu during the virtual tabling of the R1.5552 billion budget this week. The Department has set aside R121 million as a portion of the Human Settlement Development Grant (HSDG) for the revitalization of the mining towns namely, eMalahleni, Steve Tshwete and Thaba Chweu Local Municipalities. The speech as delivered in the midst of obdurate COVID-19 pandemic sets tone for Department's plans to enable and promote hygiene through the upgrading of bulk infrastructure. Notably, the Department's 2020/21 budget has shown a decrease of 21% when compared to

the adjusted budget of the previous financial year from R1.957 billion to R1.552 billion. Notwithstanding this massive reduction, MEC Mahlangu pronounced forward looking and people centred plans and programmes. She added that the Department will also deliver 2 654 housing units under the Integrated Residential Development Phase Two, 877 housing units under the People's Housing Programme, 30 housing units for military veterans, and 634 housing units under the Rural Housing Programme units will be delivered. On plans related to COVID-19, she emphasized the need for practical and tangible interventions to help curb the spread of the virus. "The focus will be on assisting municipalities with mass sanitization and disinfection of high risk area in informal settlements to enable social distancing and self-isolation thereby reducing the possibility

of community spread", she said. The Department also prioritised sewer spillage intervention in affected areas whilst promoting hygiene conditions through the provision of bulk water and sanitation. To this end, the Department has ring-fenced R162 million for the upgrading of informal settlements across the province.

In bringing about the much needed social cohesion and integration, the Department will continue to implement a total number of six Community Residential Units projects in Mzinoni, Reabota, uMjindi, Sonheuwel, Malelane Extension 21, Sabie and three Social and Economic Facilities will be rolled out. "It must be noted that we are experiencing budgetary reductions and planning to deliver 4 245 low-cost houses, service 6000 sites in various municipalities to yield over 10 000 housing opportunities," pronounced Mahlangu.



## Ermelo welcomes a massive Breaking New Ground (BNG) Project

Residents of Ermelo and surroundings in Msukaligwa Local Municipality, Mpumalanga, are to benefit from the Department of Human Settlements' multimillion-rand Breaking New Grounds (BNG) project that will see 4700 housing units built and 5538 stands serviced over the period of three years. The project that will yield different housing typologies constructed at Ermelo Extension 44 is part of MEC Norah Mahlangu's mega projects under the Integrated Residential Development Programme as well as Upgrading Informal Settlements Programme aimed at fostering and bringing about much needed social cohesion and integration. Speaking at the launch, MEC Mahlangu reiterated the Department's commitment to its strategic objective of creating livable neighborhoods. "We embarked on projects that ensure access to adequate housing closer to employment opportunities. We want communities

with all necessary social amenities hence we invited other institutions to invest in human settlements developments such as Ermelo Extension 44", charged Mahlangu.

She was also critical on the role of municipalities in relation to their planning by stressing that they must ensure that residents have adequate access to housing on a progressive basis, ensure health and safety of its inhabitants, provision of water, electricity, roads, storm water drainage and transport in a manner, which is economically efficient. She then called upon all partners to work closely with communities and local businesses to ensure a smooth running of the project.

Adding his voice, Executive Mayor of Msukaligwa Cllr Buti Mkhaliphi lauded the development as the tone setting for more development in the town. "We are grateful for this housing development as will be a tone setter for future development across

Msukaligwa. The futuristic outlook for the town will be seen through this project", lauded Mkhaliphi. He also called upon communities not to frustrate the progress of the project and jealously protect and defend this development.

The Department is also planning the following integrated projects as announced by MEC Mahlangu during the 2020/21 budget speech: Umjindi Extension 17, Nkosi City, Matsafeni Precinct, Dingwell, Casa da Lua, Maggiesdal, Colts Hill, White River Ext 71, Mashishing Ext. 6, Ext. 8, Ext 9 and Ext. 10 and Sabie Ext 10, Komatipoort Ext 18, KaMhlushwa A Ext 3, Mjejane, SEZ Smart City, Kinross Ext 33 and Ext 34, Kempville Ext 2, KwaZamokuhle Ext 9, Rondebodch, Naauwpoort, Phola/Iraq to mention but a few in various municipalities in the Province. Other successful BNG projects include the famous Klarinet Phase 1 in eMalahleni, Rockville in Middelburg, and Tekwane South in Mbombela.

# Calls for transformation in the real estate sector

Claims of systematic exclusion of black property practitioners and principals dominated consultations of Property Practitioners Regulations, 2020. This follows the President's assent into law the Property Practitioners Act, 2020 which establishes the Property Practitioners Regulatory Authority, which the intent to regulate the real estate sector. The session held recently at White River, City of Mbombela in Mpumalanga was attended by real estate practitioners and principals as well as government technocrats particularly from the housing sector. Outlining the foundations of the regulations Mr Pitso Selolo from the National Department of Human Settlements Legal Services stated that the core purpose was to open up the real estate sector for effective and tangible transformation. "These regulations are meant to ensure the optimal function of the property market, whilst ensuring that it represents the South African demographics", he said. He went on to say that the regulations will professionalize the property market and promote it as a profession of choice and conducive environment for all role players in the property market. The regulations state that anyone who harbours ambitions of becoming a property practitioner must undergo candidature programme designed by the Authority and be supervised by a principal or property practitioner with three years' experience. During the candidatureship such a person must undergo NQF qualification prescribed by the Authority and as well as the PDE examination. This is also applicable to those property practitioners who want to be principals. To speed up transformation assessments such as recognition for prior learning will be utilized to fast-

track property practitioners who have been in the sector for a considerable period. Adding a voice to the engagements, Mr. Godfrey Letuba from one of the real estate agents called on government to deny funding those trainers who systematically exclude blacks. "Many black property practitioners are enrolled in training and never get their Fidelity Fund Certificates due to systematic exclusion, they make us fail", charged Letuba. He called on government to look at the end goal for purposes of funding and transformation becoming a key determining factor. Another Real Estate Agent, Ms. Joyce Mashinini called for sustainable transformation of the sector as she proposed that real estate education should be an integral part of school curriculum. "We need to use law and make it mandatory for school kids to learn about property. This is in line with the continuous professional development which must be kept abreast of the developments of the property market. The regulations are in the consultation stage conducted by National Department of Human Settlements in collaboration with provincial department. All comments received will be considered towards finalization of the regulations. The Act seeks to regulate and transform the industry. However, the Department of Human Settlements has to come up with regulations which are necessary to give effect to the commencement of the Act. It is in this context that the Department is calling on Property Practitioners (Bond Originators, Auctioneers, Trusts, Property Evaluators, Accessors) and the public at large to comment on the draft regulations to be published by the Minister of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation. The final Regulations will be

published in the Government Gazette and written comments can be submitted to [Lisa.Masilo@dhs.gov.za](mailto:Lisa.Masilo@dhs.gov.za) and [Rose.Murray@dhs.gov.za](mailto:Rose.Murray@dhs.gov.za). More countrywide consultations are continuing.



# Receiving a house after a long wait



Senior citizen Mr Moss Bhembe (77) from Wesselson Extension 2, Msukalingwa Local Municipality in Mpumalanga has lauded the Department of Human Settlements for giving him a house after a long wait. Mr Bhembe took occupation of his house in 2019 as part of the beneficiaries who are set to benefit from a 300 units' informal settlements upgrading project in various areas of the municipality. The Department's Covid-19 Compliance Assessment Team visited the project and Mr Bhembe to assess compliance on safety measures under alert level 3 regulations and how beneficiaries have been impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic.

Speaking to the team Mr Bhembe expressed his delight with the house saying it could not have come at the better time where hygiene and social distancing are of need. "I got my house just in time as the world is in war with Covid-19. I can observe hygiene and social distancing practices more effectively", lauded Bhembe. He has been living in a corrugated iron shack for over 18 years. A total of 40 units have since been completed, beneficiaries have taken occupation and the others units are at various stages of completion.

Project Manager, Tebella Marnabas from D.R Bongani stated that the contractor has implemented all safety measures as guided by the Department. "We have cut our teams to four people per unit to enable social distancing while we continue to deliver and screenings take place every day", she said. She also bemoaned that new normal adversely affects their delivery, however they looking at finishing the entire project by the end of the financial year.

The Department unannounced its readiness in May giving details, priority areas and safety measures that ought to be adhered to and mitigate the transfer of the pandemic. This move followed the easing of national lockdown, which saw the immediate stoppage of all construction works on-site to alert Level 4 as announced by the President of Republic of South Africa. In her 2020/21 Budget Vote, MEC Norah Mahlangu announced that the Department has planned to complete 4 245 government subsidised houses and other services with just over R1.5 billion during the 2020/21 financial year.

Tune in to **Sikhaba iCovid-19**, our daily COVID-19 radio update.

Brought to you by the National Department of Health and SABC Education.

# SATMA Awards to grow local economy

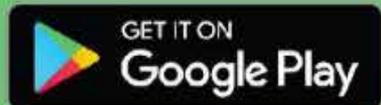
The Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation celebrated its 15th Anniversary of the SATMA Awards at the Ingwenyama Conference and Sports Resort. MEC for Culture, Sport and Recreation Ms. Lindiwe Ntshalintshali said that hosting the Satma Awards will have positive economic outcomes for the Mpumalanga Province. “The province will use the Satma Awards as a base to market the Place of the Rising Sun as a

destination of choice for hosting big events. The province’s résumé includes Metro FM Music Awards, 2010 FIFA World Cup and Gospel Music Awards,” she said. The founder of the Awards, Mr. Dumisani Goba and Head: Culture, Sport and Recreation, Mr Godfrey Ntombela attended the event. The event was celebrated with song and dance, including a #JerusalemDanceChallenge and performances by Blaq Diamond and the Queen of Ndebele music, Mkhwebane.



# THE POWER IS IN YOUR HANDS

The **COVID Alert SA** app can notify you if you have been exposed to another app user with coronavirus. Download it now to protect yourself and others.



iOS



Android



## Shova Kalula Bicycle Programme to improve the culture of learning

**T**he Mpumalanga Provincial Government is making inroads in promoting the culture of teaching and learning through the provision of bicycles travel long distances to school.

On Friday - 16 October 2020, MEC Gillion Mashego took a short-leave to Thaba Chweu Local Municipality joined by the Executive Mayor, Cllr Fridah Nkadameng where they handed over 124 bicycles to learners from various schools at Ehlanzeni District. A further 526 will be distributed during October to remaining schools at Ehlanzeni and Gert Sibande districts while Nkangala has already received its share of 350. The National Department of Transport has also donated a total of 375 bicycles which have also been allocated to several schools in the Province. The purpose of the Shova Kalula Bicycle Programme

is part of the Province's non-motorised transport strategy aimed at augmenting scholar transport services. It targets learners who travel more than three but less than five kilometres to the nearest school and as a result do not qualify for Scholar transport. This came about on the realization that these learners often arrive late at school and not to mention exhausted which affect their concentration on learning activities.

The Department of Education through School Governing Bodies (SGB) plays a critical role in identifying learners in NEED of assistance. As the custodian of public transport in Mpumalanga, the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport is responsible for the coordination of the programme. Since its inception in 2001 by the National

Department of Transport, over 100 000 bicycles have been distributed throughout South Africa.

During the handover ceremony in Sabie, MEC Mashego encouraged learners to focus on their studies in order to change the socio-economic narrative of poverty, unemployment and inequality. "These bicycles represent the journey ahead of you. We are faced with a mountain of challenges such as illiteracy, poverty, unemployment, inequality and of course COVID-19 pandemic amongst others. It is through education that we can be able to change the narrative. I am therefore encouraging you to paddle through these mountains. Take advantage of the opportunity presented to you by our democratic Government to focus on your studies in order to build a better future for yourselves," elaborated the MEC.

## Stay informed on #COVID-19

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