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INDEPENDENT QUARTERLY MAGAZINE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

Volume 8 // August 2024



MEC Faith Mazibuko

Rebuilding relationships with NPO's in Gauteng -
expanding social services



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CONTENTS



Social services

COVER STORY

MEC Faith Mazibuko
Rebuilding relationships
with NPO's in Gauteng -
expanding social services



GNU: A New Era for
South Africa

Private Sector Poised
to Revitalize South
Africa's Struggling
Sectors: A New
Era of Collaboration

Strengthening Bonds:
Gauteng Provincial
Government's
Commitment to NPOs

Bojanala
platinum district
municipality
dedicated to
service delivery

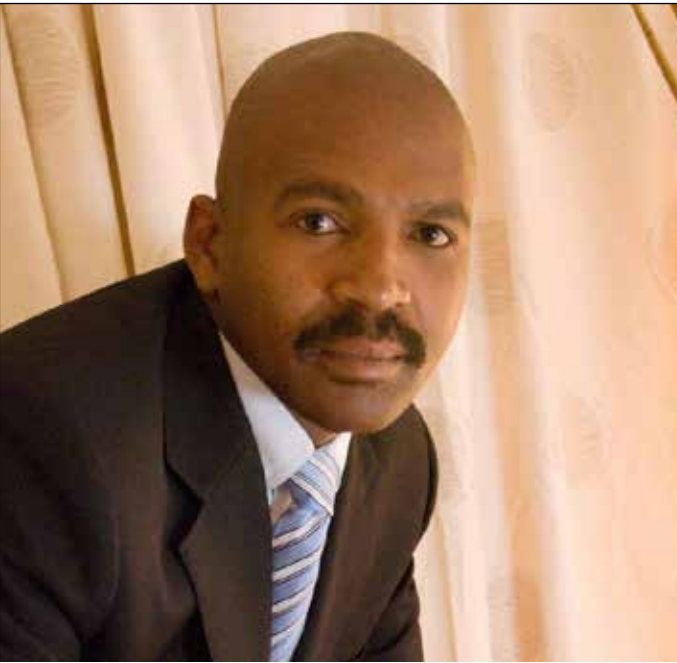
04 Public Protector's
Report Criticizes
Handling of Gender-
Based Violence
Complaints **30**

10 South Africa's
'Renewable Energy
Revolution' a
Tantalising Prospect **38**

16 Gas and Oil
Exploration
Essential for South
Africa's Economic
Growth, Says Minister
Gwede Mantashe **40**

24 Government Pushes
for Affordable
Healthcare for All **50**

Foreword



Our collective vision is clear—jobs are a priority, not just as a means of livelihood but as a cornerstone for building resilient communities. Equally important is our commitment to alleviating poverty, which remains a critical challenge. By addressing these areas with vigor, we can pave the way for a thriving economy that benefits all.

In reflecting on Nelson Mandela Day, we are reminded of his enduring legacy of leadership, sacrifice, and the relentless pursuit of justice. Mandela’s vision of a united and equitable South Africa serves as our guiding light as we strive to honor his memory through tangible actions and progress.

Furthermore, as we celebrate Women’s Month, we pay tribute to the extraordinary women who have made significant strides in various fields, particularly in STEM. Their contributions continue to inspire and drive change, underscoring the importance of gender equality in our journey towards a better future.

It is with a deep sense of purpose and optimism that I present this edition of Back 2 Basics Magazine. As we navigate the complex landscape of our nation’s progress, recent elections have marked a pivotal moment in our history. The outcome, heralding the formation of a Government of National Unity (GNU), promises a renewed commitment to unity and collaborative governance. This new chapter presents an opportunity to refocus our efforts on the pressing issues that matter most to our people: creating jobs, alleviating poverty, and fostering sustainable economic growth.

As we look forward to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, let us draw strength from our past achievements and remain steadfast in our commitment to building a prosperous and inclusive South Africa for all.

Sincerely,
Lawrence Mofokeng
Publisher, Back 2 Basics Magazine

Lawrence Mofokeng

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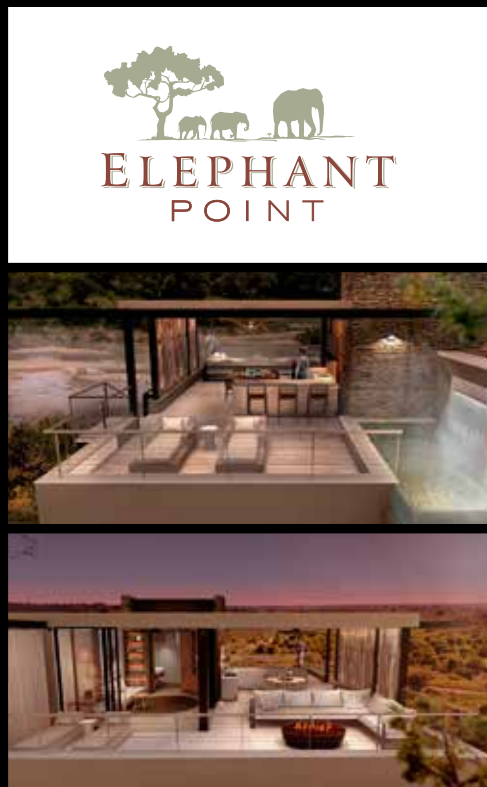
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GNU: A New Era for South Africa



President Cyril Ramaphosa delivers the Opening of Parliament Address (OPA) for the Seventh Administration

As the seventh administration's new Cabinet takes charge, it is clear that placing ordinary South Africans at the forefront of governance is crucial. Extraordinary Professor at the Department of Political Sciences at the University of Pretoria, Henning Melber, emphasizes the importance of this focus. "Show the ordinary South Africans that their well-being is the ultimate goal and at the heart

of those running government and the administration," Melber told SAnews.

The Will of the People

The election results left citizens wondering about the future, given their familiarity with a single-party majority rule since the advent of democracy. Despite the uncertainties, peace prevailed throughout the election process, including the swearing-in of Members of Parliament (MPs) and the

election of key parliamentary leaders. This peaceful transition underscored the acceptance of the will of the people at the ballot box, paving the way for the seventh administration's Government of National Unity (GNU).

This GNU is distinct from the post-1994 arrangement, which saw the African National Congress (ANC) form a unity government despite winning an outright majority. The current GNU in-



cludes 11 parties across the political spectrum: the ANC, Democratic Alliance (DA), Patriotic Alliance, Inkatha Freedom Party, Good Party, Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, Freedom Front Plus, United Democratic Movement, Al Jama-ah, Rise Mzansi, and United Africans Transformation.

Collaboration and Trust

Melber advises that parties within the GNU collaborate based on trust to improve service delivery. Reflecting on the week's events, including the swearing-in of the new Cabinet and Deputy President Paul Mashatile, Melber highlights that the process, though lengthy, was necessary. "Given the unusual blend of parties needing to secure common ground and agree on a power-sharing arrangement, this process had not taken that long. Building a reliable collaboration between political parties so different in their programmes needs time," Melber explained.

A New Era

In his inauguration address on June 19, 2024, President Ramaphosa described the GNU as "the beginning of a new era," anchored in national unity, peace, stability, inclusive economic growth, non-racialism, and non-sex-

ism. Melber echoed these sentiments, stating, "Under the given circumstances of the election result, the decision to form a GNU seemed to be a wise and considerate move, aiming to accommodate a broad middle for political stability in a government, in which the ANC remains the major party." The announcement of the new Cabinet also brought changes to government departments, including the merger of the Ministries of Electricity and Energy and the creation of a separate Ministry of Mineral and Petroleum Resources. These adjustments, Melber notes, are necessary to accommodate divergent interests in governance, aiming to improve delivery and operational structure.

Setting Priorities

Minister in the Presidency Khumbudzo Ntshavheni outlined the process for setting government's priorities and programme of action for the seventh administration. The Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) will be guided by the election manifestoes of the 11 GNU parties. This framework will be deliberated and adopted at the Cabinet Lekgotla on July 11-12, with the finalized programme of action announced by the President at the Opening of Parliament on July 18.

Rising Happiness

Following the elections and the new Cabinet announcement, South Africa's happiness trends have been on an upward trajectory. The Gross National Happiness (GNH) index, developed by Professors Talita Greyling of the University of Johannesburg and Stephanie Rossouw of Auckland University of Technology, measures real-time sentiment in the country. Since the election results, happiness levels have risen from 5.36 to 5.42, reflecting hope for a better future.

Looking Ahead

Asked whether he thinks the GNU will endure, Professor Melber is cautiously optimistic. "One hopes for the sake of South African citizens that this GNU manages to operate and serve the best interest of the people. If this construction holds, it is a win-win situation for all the parties who were able to compromise for the sake of the people and the country's stability," he said.

As South Africa embarks on this new era under a Government of National Unity, the focus remains on fostering trust, collaboration, and inclusive growth to ensure a stable and prosperous future for all its citizens.



Ramaphosa Promises Stability and Job Creation in Unity Government

President Cyril Ramaphosa emphasized job creation as a priority for the new government, assuring the stability of the Government of National Unity (GNU) despite concerns. In his address at Parliament's opening on Thursday, Ramaphosa highlighted renewable energy as a key sector to revitalize the economy.

Ramaphosa reassured citizens that while the GNU partners have differences, particularly regarding the implementation of National Health Insurance (NHI), they are united on essential issues for national progress. "We agree that we should work together to advance the interests of all South Africans. We share a commitment to a united,

prosperous, and inclusive nation. We are one people and share a common destiny," he said.

The GNU, formed after the May general elections that resulted in no outright winner, includes 10 political parties such as the ANC, DA, and IFP. Ramaphosa stated that the election outcome indicated a public desire for political collaboration to create a "better South Africa for all." He stressed the importance of unity, co-operation, and partnership in addressing poverty, unemployment, and inequality.

Ramaphosa acknowledged the economic challenges, including load shedding, but noted progress in power generation, poverty alleviation, and job creation. He highlighted the success

of the Energy Action Plan and various employment initiatives, which have created nearly two million work opportunities. The GNU aims to expand these programs significantly.

Looking ahead, Ramaphosa outlined plans to leverage the renewable energy sector for inclusive growth and employment. He emphasized South Africa's potential in green manufacturing, focusing on exporting green hydrogen, electric vehicles, and renewable energy components. The GNU is also addressing the high cost of living by implementing measures to protect citizens, especially the poor. To ensure effective governance, Ramaphosa committed to hiring capable and ethical individuals and stabilizing government debt.

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The Seventh Administration's Cabinet

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MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES	MINISTER OF COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS	MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS	
 <p>SOLLY MALATSI</p> 	 <p>VELENKOSINI HLABISA</p> 	 <p>ANGIE MOTSHEKGA</p> 	
MINISTER OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY	MINISTER OF SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION	MINISTER OF EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR	
 <p>KGOSIENTSHO RAMOKGOPA</p> 	 <p>BLADE NZIMANDE</p> 	 <p>NOMAKHOSAZANA METH</p> 	

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 <p>NOBUHLE NKABANE</p> 	 <p>LEON SCHREIBER</p> 	 <p>MMAMOLOKO KUBAYI</p> 
MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION	MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	MINISTER OF MINERAL AND PETROLEUM RESOURCES
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MINISTER OF PLANNING MONITORING AND EVALUATION	MINISTER OF POLICE	MINISTER OF THE PRESIDENCY
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 <p>MZAMO BUTHELEZI</p> 	 <p>DEAN MACPHERSON</p> 	 <p>STELLA NDABENI-ABRAHAMS</p> 

Private Sector Poised to Revitalize South Africa's Struggling Sectors: A New Era of Collaboration

In his inaugural budget vote for the seventh administration, Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana emphasized a critical shift in South Africa's economic strategy. On July 17, 2024, Godongwana unveiled a R33.2 billion budget, underscoring the government's intent to accelerate private sector investment into key areas of the economy that are currently faltering.

Godongwana's speech highlighted a strategic parallel to the successful infusion of private capital into the energy sector, triggered by legislative reforms in the previous administration. He outlined plans to replicate this model for the water and transport sectors.

"While these reforms are ongoing, National Treasury is actively working to formalize memoranda of agreement similar to those that govern the Independent Power Producers Office for both transport and water sectors," Godongwana stated. "Our objective is to systematically enhance private sector involvement in these critical areas."

The drive for Private Sector Participation (PSP) has become a hallmark of President Cyril Ramaphosa's ad-



ministration. In a recent newsletter, Ramaphosa reported that the private sector has already contributed over R170 million in direct support and



mobilized more than 350 technical experts, with over 130 CEOs pledging their support to address challenges in the energy and logistics sectors. Godongwana elaborated on the government's macro-fiscal strategy, stating, "One of our key pillars is to enhance the effectiveness of public infrastructure investments. Policy and regulatory reforms in energy, transport, and water are foundational to increasing these investments."

Momentum in Motion

This strategic shift is already taking shape across various departments. The Department of Transport, under new minister Barbara Creecy, aims to adopt the successful strategies used with Eskom to tackle logistics challenges. Creecy's budget speech on May 15, 2024, revealed plans to establish a PSP unit focused on identifying opportunities for private sector involvement in rail and ports.

Similarly, the Department of Water is pushing forward with the establishment of the South African National Water Resources Infrastructure Agency (NWRIA).

This state-owned company will oversee national water infrastructure and seek substantial private invest-

ment to fund its operations. Minister Pemmy Majodina anticipates that the agency will be substantially financed by the private sector by May 2025.

The Department of Communications and Digital Technologies, led by Minister Solly Malatsi, is also capitalizing on the country's extensive digital infrastructure. Malatsi's recent budget speech highlighted the potential for private-public partnerships to create jobs and revitalize the South African Post Office.

These initiatives reflect a broader government strategy to engage the private sector, seen as a necessary evolution to address persistent economic challenges. Business Unity South Africa (BUSA) has expressed support for this approach. CEO Cas Coovadia has emphasized the importance of continuing economic reforms and strengthening partnerships between business and government.

Driven by Necessity

However, this shift towards private sector involvement is not merely a strategic choice but a response to pressing needs. Independent political analyst J.P. Landman has noted that South Africa's historical government

control over infrastructure—ranging from electricity to transport—has led to significant economic issues, including the ongoing energy and logistics crises.

Landman pointed out that the load-shedding crisis, in particular, has prompted a reevaluation of the traditional monopolistic model. With Eskom now transitioning towards a hybrid model of generation, transmission, and distribution, the government's move to encourage private sector participation reflects a broader strategy to overcome the limitations of past practices.

"What we are witnessing is a shift from a state-dominated model to a hybrid approach," Landman observed. "The reforms in electricity are setting a precedent for similar transformations in transport and water, marking a significant departure from the old monopolistic control."

As South Africa navigates this transformative period, the collaboration between government and the private sector stands poised to redefine the country's economic landscape, offering new hope for revitalizing critical sectors and addressing longstanding challenges.

Umhlahlandlela: MEC Faith Mazibuko Unveils Social Development Priorities for Gauteng during 2024/25 Budget Speech

Empowering Lives: Gauteng's Commitment to Tackling Inequality and Building Stronger Communities



MEC Faith Mazibuko during 2024/25 Budget Vote at the Gauteng Provincial Legislature

As we celebrate 30 years of democracy, the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment, and inequality persist, exacerbated by the lingering economic and structural challenges of apartheid, a slowing global economy, and slow

growth rates in Africa. These issues remind us of the immense task ahead to improve the living conditions of those affected by poverty, unemployment, and inequality. These challenges are also strategic focus areas of GGT2030. The late President Nelson Rolihlah-

la Mandela once said, "As long as poverty, injustice, and gross inequality persist in our world, none of us can truly rest." These words, spoken in 2005, remain as true today. Our commitment to addressing these issues is unwavering, and this budget vote demonstrates our dedication to



MEC Mazibuko addressing delegates at the NPO Provincial Imbizo in Westonaria

improving the lives of the people in Gauteng.

Achievements of the Past Year

The Department has made significant strides in restoring the dignity of Gauteng's most vulnerable people. Through the Gauteng City Region Poverty and Inequality Strategy 2019–2030, the GCR Strategy to address Street Adult Homelessness 2021–2024, the Gauteng City Region Anti-Substance Abuse Strategy, and the Sector Funding Policy, we have targeted safety, social cohesion, and food security as outlined in the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP).

Our key priorities included food security initiatives, fighting substance abuse, tackling homelessness, and ensuring skills development.

Food Relief

The Department provided food relief to the most vulnerable, expanding food security interventions in the poorest communities. Over 438,083 people in 55,054 households benefited from food parcels, nutritious daily meals through home and communi-

ty-based care organisations, and food relief through our foodbanks and nutrition centres.

Substance Abuse

The National Drug Master Plan (NDMP) 2019–2024 guided our efforts in dealing with substance abuse. We focused on expanding treatment services, particularly outpatient and community-based treatment. As a result, 37,538 substance users received assistance, including referrals from the Gauteng Province Anti-Substance Abuse Helpline call centre.

Homelessness

Homelessness is most pronounced within the Metros (Johannesburg, Tshwane, and Ekurhuleni). The Department, in collaboration with NPOs, assisted 233,748 beneficiaries through psychosocial services, family reunification, shelters, substance abuse treatment, warm daily meals, skills development, and outreach campaigns. We also launched mobile showers and mobile offices to ensure the hygiene and health of homeless people and facilitate their registration and referrals for further assistance.

Skills Development

The Department tackled youth challenges through comprehensive skills development programs aimed at improving employability and creating sustainable jobs. We provided accredited skills training to 114,025 welfare beneficiaries, including recovering substance users, homeless persons, youth exiting foster care, GBVF victims, Child Support Grant and Social Relief of Distress Grant recipients, HIV/AIDS patients, and youth in and exiting Child and Youth Care Centres (CYCCs).

Looking Ahead: 2024/25 Financial Year

In the upcoming financial year, the Department will continue to focus on Growing Gauteng Together (GGT 2030) with particular emphasis on Townships, Informal Settlements, Hostels (TISH), and CBDs.

Food Relief (Thiba Tlala)

Despite noticeable gains, South African citizens still face high unemployment, poverty, an energy crisis, and rising costs of living, impacting food security. The War on Poverty Profiling

Programme will continue to address the needs of 776,500 beneficiaries in deprived communities. We are exploring the establishment of a state-run food distribution centre to reduce reliance on NPOs, especially during emergencies. Additionally, we aim to transition from food parcels to food vouchers for easier management and to meet families' specific needs.

Substance Abuse

The Department will intensify awareness campaigns to reach 4,736,786 people and provide substance use disorder treatment services to 46,110 beneficiaries. We are finalizing state-owned substance abuse facilities like Dr. Florence and Fabian and repurposing the Emmasdal CYCC to become a substance abuse facility. Substance abuse walk-in centres will be established in each township across the province.

Homelessness

Gauteng has the highest number of homeless people, with 45.6% of South Africa's homeless population living in our province. The Department will implement the Provincial Strategy on Homelessness to reach 306,733 beneficiaries through appropriate sheltered accommodation and outreach programmes. We will explore safe spaces and occupation of unused buildings in CBDs to provide decent sleep for the homeless. Mobile wash buses will assist with hygiene and ablution facilities. Efforts will also be made to combat street begging and address the trafficking of persons and children.

Masupatsela Programme

We will launch the Masupatsela Programme to mobilise girls and boys over the next three years, focusing on life skills, substance abuse, and character building. Beneficiaries will be sourced through community identification, the Department's caseload, designated child protection organisations, Crime Prevention Programmes,



MEC Mazibuko doing her part during 2024 Mandela Day

orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC), Drop-In centres, and school intervention programs. Furthermore, we will organise drum majorette carnivals and bring Amatshitshi into the fold.

Skills Development

The Development Centre model will use multi-purpose centres to deliver comprehensive services to the poor. The Department will facilitate access to sustainable livelihoods and ensure 123,292 beneficiaries participate in

the economy through skills development and job placements. Linked to the Tshepo 1 Million strategy, we will create 9,105 Expanded Public Work (EPWP) work opportunities and up-scale the Welfare to Work Programme to target 26,653 young beneficiaries dependent on social grants.

Dignity Packs and School Uniform

Efforts to increase school attendance and educational achievement among children from poor households will



Budget break down. Source: GDSD

include the provision of 185,000 school uniform kits and 776,000 dignity packs. The Bana Pele programme will be resuscitated to alleviate child poverty. We aim to ensure that no less than 100,000 learners wear government-issued school uniforms on the first day of school in January 2025.

Gender-Based Violence

The province has experienced high rates of gender-based violence and femicide. We will strengthen our integrated approach to eliminate violence against women and children by working with SAPS and other stakeholders. The Department will fund 108 NPOs to manage victim support shelters, provide sheltering, psychosocial ser-

vices, and life skills programmes to 56,628 victims of crime and violence.

Care for the Vulnerable

The protection and care of Persons with Disabilities and Older Persons remain our priorities. We will continue to fund residential facilities and community-based programmes for older persons and persons with disabilities. The Department is committed to its statutory obligation to protect and care for vulnerable children.

2024/25 Budget Allocation

For the current financial year, Treasury has allocated R5,466,262,000 to the Department of Social Development, distributed as follows:

- Administration: R826,269,000
- Social Welfare Services: R883,281,000
- Children and Families: R2,131,258,000
- Restorative Services: R800,053,000
- Development & Research: R825,401,000

NPOs will receive R1,908,689,000, constituting 35% of the total departmental budget. During the budget adjustment period, the NPO budget allocation will be increased to R2.13 billion. Elevated priorities have been allocated R754,270,000, constituting 14% of the total departmental budget, including:

- Substance Abuse: R303,574,000
- Homelessness: R87,767,000
- Food Parcels: R50,000,000
- School Uniform: R153,846,000
- Dignity Packs: R159,083,000

Our work will continue to be pro-poor, developmental, and focused on combating poverty, unemployment, and inequality. We will create an Indigent Register to better plan and execute interventions with stakeholders such as SASSA, the Department of Affairs, COGTA, and others.

Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs)

On July 21, myself and MEC Lebo-gang Maile addressed NPO funding challenges. Stabilising the NPO sector is a priority of the 7th administration. We aim to create a database of NPOs working with the government, streamlining their work, funding them as planned, paying on time, and holding them accountable. This will ensure harmony and effective service delivery to beneficiaries.

In conclusion, "As long as poverty, injustice, and gross inequality persist in our world, none of us can truly rest." We have demonstrated our achievements and plans, hence we seek the support of the House for our budget vote.

Strengthening Bonds: Gauteng Provincial Government's Commitment to NPOs

The Gauteng Provincial Government (GPG) has fostered a long-standing, mutually beneficial relationship with the Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) sector. This collaboration has not only been advantageous for the parties involved but has also significantly benefited the broader residents of Gauteng. Through this partnership, the GPG continues to transform society by nurturing conscious and capable citizens via integrated social development services.

Substantial Support for NPOs working with Social Development

The Gauteng Department of Social Development (GDSD) plays a crucial role in funding NPOs, with an annual allocation of nearly R2 billion to over 700 NPOs across the province's five corridors. This substantial financial support aligns with the core programs of Social Development, positioning Gauteng as the leading province in NPO funding in South Africa. On 21 July new MEC for Gauteng Department Social Development, Ms. Faith Mazibuko, led a media briefing on NPO Funding together with MEC for Gauteng Provincial Treasury, Mr Lebogang Maile.

"The NPOs extend and enhance the GDSD's efforts, enabling the department to fulfil its mandate more effectively. While occasional challenges and misunderstandings occur in any relationship, both the government and NPOs recognize the importance of

maintaining a collaborative and stable partnership", said MEC Mazibuko at the media briefing.

Addressing Recent Strains

Recent months have seen a strain in relations between the Provincial Government and NPOs. Premier Panyaza Lesufi has issued an unreserved apology for any disruptions caused, extending a special apology to affected beneficiaries, including the elderly in Old Age Homes, children in Child and Youth Care Centres (CYCCs), recov-

ering substance abusers in Rehabilitation Centres, and families dependent on food parcels.

The 7th administration of the Gauteng Provincial Government prioritizes improving relationships with the NPO sector and resuming the full delivery of services to beneficiaries. Interim Service Level Agreements (SLAs) have been issued to eligible NPOs to expedite payments for the first two quarters, ensuring a regular payment process.

Ensuring Compliance and Transparency

Compliance remains a significant challenge for many NPOs, and the government cannot fund non-compliant organizations. This is crucial to avoid audit queries and uphold the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA). The Department regularly hosts workshops to educate the sector about compliance requirements.

Investigations into some NPOs have contributed to payment delays, but these are nearing conclusion. Cleared NPOs have been paid or are being considered for funding, subject to availability.

During the 2024/2025 Financial Year, the Department was involved in several litigation matters regarding NPO funding. The Department complied with court orders, and no contempt orders were issued, despite some media reports. These legal settlements

underscore the Department's commitment to transparency and resolving the NPO funding process amicably.

Advocacy and Future Plans

The Department advocates for NPOs through Inter-Governmental Relations (IGR) forum meetings, addressing issues such as expediting compliance certificates from municipalities and waiving certain costs for NPOs. While demonstrating willingness to work with NPOs, the government also holds the sector accountable for disbursed funds, aiming for an ethical, professional, efficient, and robust sector.

Quarterly NPO imbizo sessions will be introduced to empower NPOs and address any misunderstandings. The Gauteng Provincial Treasury is committed to ensuring timely payments to NPOs, reinstating the NPO budget to the 2023/24 adjustment budget of R2.131 billion, reflecting a 13%

growth against the previous year's expenditure to accommodate new funding applications.

Commitment to Timely Payments and Possible Longer-Term Contracts

From May 20th to July 18th, the Provincial Treasury processed 3031 payments amounting to R792.02 million. In the first quarter (Q1), 1483 transactions totalling R353.7 million were processed, and in the second quarter (Q2), which began in July, 1548 transactions totalling R441.3 million were completed.

Despite a few NPOs facing compliance issues or undergoing investigations, the government is committed to resolving these matters promptly. Additionally, the GPG aims to revise contracts with NPOs to ensure three-year agreements, minimizing red tape and providing job security for those employed within the sector.

The Gauteng Provincial Government remains steadfast in its commitment to working with NPOs to build stronger communities. As the province navigates challenges and strives for progress, the collaboration between the GPG and NPOs will continue to be a cornerstone of social and economic development in Gauteng.

As promised on 21 July, the hosted the first Provincial NPO Imbizo under the 7th Administration. MEC Mazibuko recommitted the Department to working closer with the NPO sector and to make sure that the collaboration delivers much needed assistance and services to Gauteng's most vulnerable.

"We have demonstrated our willingness and commitment to work with the NPO sector, we are also going to hold the sector accountable for the funds disbursed. We hope that the sector will work with us to have an ethical, professional, efficient and robust sector. This will ensure that we strengthen monitoring and root out corruption and maladministration.



Delegates at the Provincial NPO Imbizo held on 02 August 2024 in Westonaria

Commemorating Nelson Mandela Day: Reflecting on 30 Years of Freedom and Democracy



Every year on 18 July, South Africans come together to celebrate and honour Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, the country's first black president and a global icon whose legacy continues to inspire. This day not only commemorates his life and work but also serves as a reminder of the ideals he championed: a non-racial, non-sexist, and equal society.

PA Global Call to Action

Mandela Day, established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2009, encourages people worldwide to take responsibility in addressing the challenges faced by humanity. This year, the theme "It's still in our hands to combat poverty and ineq-

uity" underscores the ongoing relevance of Mandela's mission. South Africans are urged to engage in acts of service, reflecting the spirit of Ubuntu – the belief that our humanity is interconnected.

A Month-Long Celebration

In South Africa, the celebration of Mandela's legacy extends throughout July.

This period offers numerous opportunities for citizens to contribute to community upliftment, whether through establishing food gardens, supporting local soup kitchens, or participating in community clean-up efforts. These actions not only honor Mandela's memory but also demonstrate the power of collective action in overcoming societal challenges.

Events and Activities

One of the highlights of this year's Mandela Month is the 2024 Mandela Day Walk and Run, taking place on 20 July at the DP World Wanderers Stadium. Participants can choose from 5km, 10km, and 21km distances, with proceeds supporting various charitable causes. Such events foster community spirit and promote a healthy, active lifestyle while making a tangible difference.

Mandela Day and the Opening of Parliament

This year's Mandela Day is particularly significant as it coincides with the Opening of Parliament Address for the 7th Administration. President Cyril Ramaphosa will outline key priorities and policies, emphasizing the Government of National Unity's commitment to respecting the constitution and promoting good governance. South Africans are encouraged to tune in on 18 July at 7 pm to partake in this national milestone, reflecting on how far the country has come in its democratic journey.

Reflecting on 30 Years of Democracy

As South Africa commemorates 30 years of democracy and freedom, Mandela Day serves as a poignant reminder of the nation's progress. The

Democracy Bus Project, launched to engage citizens nationwide, symbolizes this journey. Traveling from bustling cities to remote rural areas, the bus shares stories of South Africa's rise from a turbulent past to a hopeful, vibrant nation.

Insights and Reflections

Reflecting on Mandela's legacy and 30 years of democracy, it's essential to consider both the achievements and the challenges that remain. South Africa has made significant strides in areas such as education, healthcare, and human rights. However, issues like poverty, inequality, and unemployment persist, requiring ongoing collective effort and innovative solutions.

Mandela's vision of a just society calls for continuous engagement from all sectors – government, business, and civil society. Collaborative initiatives that address socio-economic disparities and promote sustainable development are crucial. As we honor Mandela's legacy, it is a call to action for every individual to contribute towards building a more equitable and prosperous society.

The Road Ahead

Nelson Mandela's legacy is a guiding light for South Africa and the world. As we celebrate Mandela Day and 30 years of democracy, let us recommit to the values he stood for: justice, equality, and humanity. By working together, we can continue to build a nation that reflects these ideals, ensuring a brighter future for generations to come.





Busa Urges Unity and Action for Economic Growth Following New Cabinet Appointments

Business Unity South Africa (Busa) has called for South African leaders to transcend party-political differences and address pressing social and economic development challenges following the recent Cabinet reshuffle.

“While not everyone will be pleased with every appointment, it is essential for South Africa to unite behind the new Cabinet,” said Khulekani Mathe, Busa’s CEO designate. “The Cabinet must now swiftly implement practical, evidence-based policies that promote sustainable and inclusive economic development, job creation, investment, and social progress.”

Busa’s key priorities include fostering an environment conducive to attracting both domestic and international investment, enhancing the professionalism of the public service,

leveraging successful public-private partnerships, and managing public finances effectively.

“With the advent of coalition politics, it is crucial to build the capacity and professionalism of the state and its bureaucracy,” Mathe emphasized. “This ensures that despite any future party-political disputes, the public service remains dedicated to implementing policies that benefit all South Africans. The arbitrary dismissal of senior civil servants weakens the public service, generates policy uncertainty, and encourages loyalty to individuals rather than upholding professional standards.”

Mathe expressed optimism about continuing collaborations with the government, highlighting the successes of public-private partnerships in reducing load-shedding, improving transport and logistics infrastructure,

and enhancing the national capability to combat crime and corruption. Over 130 chief executives have reaffirmed their commitment to these partnerships, which have alleviated infrastructure and operational constraints and fostered inclusive economic growth.

“It is vital to maintain a focus on controlling public finances in alignment with the fiscal consolidation measures outlined in the 2023 Budget,” he noted. “South Africa recently achieved its first primary budget surplus in 15 years under Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana, thanks to reductions in state-owned enterprise bailouts and cuts in wasteful spending. The reappointment of Minister Godongwana reflects the government’s ongoing commitment to responsible fiscal policies that will mitigate debt and enable more productive investment in social and economic development.”

SALGA Calls on President Ramaphosa and 7th Parliament to Prioritize Revitalizing Dysfunctional Municipalities



The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) has issued a strong call for the 7th Parliament to place the revitalization of dysfunctional municipalities and the improvement of service delivery at the top of its agenda. This comes as President Cyril Ramaphosa delivered his Opening Address at a Joint Sitting of the Houses of Parliament on Thursday, 18 July 2024.

A New Legislative Term Amid a Historic Milestone

This year's Opening of Parliament not only marks the beginning of a new administration at both National and Provincial levels but also coincides with the 30-Year Review since the advent of democracy in South Africa. The 30-Year Review Report highlights the necessity of building a capable, ethical, and developmental state by enhancing the governance and fiscal



SALGA Meets with Minister of Electricity and Energy, Cape Town

sustainability of local government as a priority leading up to 2030.

Local Government's Critical Role

Cllr Bheke Stofile, leading the Local Government delegation including

SALGA representatives in the National Council of Provinces (NCOP), participated in the Opening of Parliament debate. In his address, Cllr Stofile emphasized the critical challenges facing many municipalities, which hin-

der the delivery of essential services to communities. He pointed out that these challenges stem from both internal factors within municipal control and external environmental factors beyond their control.

The Need for Cooperative Governance

Cllr Stofile stressed the importance of recognizing the pivotal role of local government in national development. He called for the 7th Parliament to place a strong emphasis on cooperative governance, which he described as a cornerstone of South Africa's government structure. He urged a holistic consideration of the factors contributing to municipal dysfunction, addressing both structural and systemic challenges.

Addressing Service Delivery and Financial Distress

Service delivery issues were highlighted as a key indicator of municipi-

pal dysfunction. Cllr Stofile noted that many municipalities have significant backlogs in infrastructure repairs and maintenance, which have not been adequately addressed.

He acknowledged that these issues are often blamed on a lack of skills and mismanagement, but emphasized that local government also needs increased capital and operational investment to meet service delivery demands.

Financial distress is another major concern, with municipal consumers owing a staggering R348 billion to municipalities. This financial strain exacerbates the difficulties faced by local governments in fulfilling their constitutional functions, which account for 46% of their responsibilities.

SALGA's Commitment to Collaborative Service Delivery

SALGA remains steadfast in its com-

mitment to working collaboratively with the government to inspire and ensure effective service delivery to the citizens of South Africa. The association continues to advocate for the necessary support and reforms to enable local governments to perform their crucial role in building democracy and promoting socio-economic development.

Looking Forward

As the new parliamentary term unfolds, the focus on revitalizing dysfunctional municipalities and improving service delivery will be critical in achieving the goals outlined in the 30-Year Review Report.

The efforts of SALGA and the commitment of the 7th Parliament will play a vital role in shaping the future of local governance in South Africa, ensuring that all citizens receive the services they need and deserve.

A New Dawn for Bojanala Platinum District: Leading with Vision and Unity

Charting the Course for Transformation and Progress

In the vibrant heart of the platinum province of South Africa lies the Bojanala Platinum District Municipality, a region poised on the brink of transformative progress. On July 15, 2024, the Madibeng Local Municipality Council Chamber resonated with the promise of a new era as Executive Mayor Cllr. Suzan Nthangeni delivered her acceptance speech. With a blend of humility and resolute determination, Mayor Nthangeni articulated a vision that not only acknowledges the challenges ahead but also illuminates the path towards a brighter future for Bojanala.

“As I accept the privilege to be the political head of Bojanala Platinum District Municipality, I do so with a profound sense of humility,” Mayor Nthangeni began, her voice filled with both reverence and resolve. She recognized the immense responsibility that lies ahead, not just for herself but for the entire team of the Mayoral Committee, fellow Councillors, and the administration. “It is a mammoth task that I accept with humble humility based on ethical leadership,” she asserted, emphasizing the importance of integrity and unity in governance.

The mayor’s vision is anchored in the spirit of national unity, a corner-



Executive Mayor of Bojanala Platinum District Municipality Executive, Cllr Suzan Nthangeni

stone of the seventh administration of South Africa. “We must work together as a unit, collaborating with residents, businesses, civic organizations, government departments, and state-owned entities,” she urged, invoking the principles of the District

Development Model (DDM) championed by President Ramaphosa.

This collaborative approach is essential to fostering a sense of community and shared purpose in the pursuit of sustainable development.



Dr. Auchalie Mothupi, Municipal Manager of Bojanala District Municipality

Mayor Nthangeni’s call to action for Team Bojanala was clear and compelling: “We are on the right trajectory of turning around Bojanala Platinum District Municipality for the better.” She pledged the Council’s unwavering support for the Acting Municipal Manager’s efforts to eradicate corruption and malfeasance, striving for a clean governance model that aims for an unqualified audit opinion by the end of the

financial year. This commitment to transparency and accountability is a testament to the mayor’s dedication to good governance.

As Bojanala celebrates thirty years of freedom and democracy, Mayor Nthangeni reminded her fellow Councillors of their duty to honor the trust placed in them by the people. “Our people have spoken in the recent national elections.

They want us to work together in unison as government, regardless of our political backgrounds and affiliations,” she stated passionately. She warned that any deviation from this collective effort would spell disaster for the communities they serve, undermining the fight against the lingering legacies of apartheid: unemployment, poverty, and inequality.

The mayor acknowledged the significant challenges still facing their communities, from gender-based violence and substance abuse to high youth unemployment.

Yet, she remained optimistic about the future. “I am positive that we are going to make positive strides as Team Bojanala in the remainder of our term,” she declared, envisioning a legacy of good governance that rejects corruption in any form.

In closing, Mayor Nthangeni expressed heartfelt gratitude to those who have supported her journey. She thanked the African National Congress for their vote of confidence, the Council of Bojanala for electing her to lead, and Cllr. Victoria Makhaula for her leadership during challenging times. She also extended her appreciation to her family for their unwavering support and to Acting Municipal Manager Dr. Auchalie Mothupi for his dedicated service.

“Together, let us continue to build Bojanala District,” Mayor Nthangeni concluded, her words a rallying cry for unity and progress. As Bojanala embarks on this new dawn, the vision and leadership of Cllr. Suzan Nthangeni stand as a beacon of hope and determination, guiding the district towards a future of prosperity and shared success.

Charting a Course for Progress: Celebrating 30 Years of Democracy through Local Governance

Bojanala Platinum District's 2024/2025 IDP Budget Vote Sets the Stage for Enhanced Service Delivery and Community Development

As South Africa commemorates 30 years of democracy, we are reminded of the transformative journey we have embarked upon. The milestone is not only a celebration of our freedom but also a reflection on the strides we've made in strengthening our democracy through effective local governance. Local government, being the closest sphere of government to the people, plays a pivotal role in ensuring that the principles of democracy translate into tangible improvements in the lives of our citizens.

In the Bojanala Platinum District Municipality, under the visionary leadership of Executive Mayor Cllr Suzan Nthangeni, we are witnessing a renewed commitment to service delivery and community engagement. As Mayor Nthangeni eloquently stated, "Our commitment to the people of Bojanala is unwavering. We are dedicated to ensuring that every decision, every project, and every policy is designed to enhance the quality of life for our residents and to uphold the values of our hard-won democracy."

The recently presented 2024/2025 draft budget and Integrated Development Plan (IDP) Review exemplify this commitment. These documents are more than just fiscal plans; they are



Executive Mayor of Bojanala Platinum District Municipality Executive, Cllr Suzan Nthangeni and North West MEC For Agriculture and Rural Development, Madoda Sambatha, leading events during launch and inspection of developmental projects in Marikana during Mandela Month

strategic blueprints aimed at addressing the needs and aspirations of our communities. By aligning our budget and IDP with national, provincial, and local strategies, we are ensuring that our development priorities are comprehensive and inclusive.

Achievements and Milestones

Reflecting on the past year, the Bojanala Platinum District has achieved remarkable milestones that highlight the effectiveness of our governance and administrative capabilities. Key achievements include:

- **Compliance and Control:** Implementation of robust systems and internal controls has ensured compliance with all applicable legislation, enhancing our administrative capabilities and service delivery.
- **Budget Management:** Despite a decrease in our equitable share allocation, our budget remains fully funded, reflecting prudent financial management and strategic resource allocation.
- **Employment Initiatives:** Through the Expanded Public Works Program (EPWP), we have provided employment opportunities to 1,046 individuals, primarily youth, across all five local municipalities.
- **Audit Improvements:** The Auditor-General of South Africa has commended our municipality for significant improvements in audit outcomes, showcasing our dedication to transparency and accountability.
- **Economic Growth:** Rustenburg's rapid growth, the positive investment climate, and substantial progress in sectors such as mining, agriculture, tourism, manufacturing, trade, and transport, underscore our district's economic potential.

Vision for the Future

Looking ahead, the Bojanala Platinum District is poised to build on these suc-

cesses by focusing on several strategic objectives:

- **Institutional Strengthening:** Enhancing coordination, accountability, and efficiency across municipal units.
- **Resource Mobilization:** Leveraging both internal and external resources to fund catalytic projects that stimulate economic growth.
- **Skills Development:** Investing in human capital to equip our workforce with the skills needed for emerging industries.
- **Economic Diversification:** Implementing broader economic plans centered on diversification and infrastructure development.
- **Tourism and Hospitality:** Promoting these sectors to boost the local economy.
- **Business Retention and Expansion:** Creating an environment that attracts and retains businesses in Bojanala.
- **Post-Pandemic Recovery:** Fostering collaboration, innovation, and inclusive growth to recover from the impacts of COVID-19.

As we celebrate 30 years of democracy, it is essential to recognize the critical role of local government in this journey. The progress we have made in Bojanala Platinum District stands as a

testament to the power of effective governance and community engagement. With continued dedication and visionary leadership, we will forge ahead, ensuring that democracy works for all our people, now and into the future.

The draft budget and IDP Review presented by Mayor Nthangeni encapsulate the collective aspirations of our communities. As we embark on a series of public participation roadshows, we invite our citizens to engage with these plans, ensuring that their voices are heard and their needs are met. Together, through our collective wisdom and unity of purpose, we will continue to improve service delivery and provide a better life for our people as we celebrate three decades of freedom and democracy.

"Let us embrace this moment with pride and determination," Mayor Nthangeni urged. "Our journey is far from over, and our commitment to our people is stronger than ever. Together, we will achieve great things for the Bojanala Platinum District and for South Africa as a whole."

The future is bright, and the road ahead is filled with promise. As we celebrate our democracy, let us remain steadfast in our commitment to building a prosperous and inclusive society for all.



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Public Protector's Report Criticizes Handling of Gender-Based Violence Complaints

In a recently published report by the Public Protector, it has been revealed that the Departments of Justice, Police, and Social Development are failing to adequately support victims of gender-based violence (GBV). The investigation, prompted by allegations that Altecja Kortje was turned away from the Bellville Magistrate's Court in June 2020 when seeking a protection order, highlights severe shortcomings in the response of these departments.

Public Protector Advocate Kholeka Gcaleka presented her findings to Deputy Minister of Justice John Jefferey on Tuesday. The report details numerous deficiencies across 38 magistrates' courts nationwide, including outdated infrastructure, malfunctioning equipment, and inadequate consultation rooms for victims. The courts also suffer from poorly managed filing systems and slow or inaccessible Integrated Case Management Systems (ICMS).

The Department of Justice is required to submit a detailed renovation and upgrade plan within seven months, addressing these issues with specific targets and timelines.

Similarly, the report criticizes the South African Police Service (SAPS) for lacking adequate facilities and training. Many rural police stations do not have victim-friendly rooms, and there are reports of SAPS officials hesitating to register cases or inform victims of their legal rights. The report mandates SAPS to implement gender sensitivity and GBV impact training within six months.

The Department of Social Development (DSD) also falls short, with insufficient shelters for GBV victims and inadequate staffing for key programs like the Gender-Based Violence Command Centre and Everyday Heroes Programme. The DSD is instructed to develop a comprehensive staff and support plan within six months.

Public Protector Gcaleka acknowledged that the report cannot undo the tragedy faced by the Kortje family but stressed that it aims to improve the system for future victims. Deputy Minister Jefferey expressed the department's commitment to addressing the report's findings and implementing the necessary changes.





Women and Work: A South African Perspective on Emerging Trends and Challenges

South Africa's workforce landscape has been significantly shaped by its complex socio-economic and political history. As the country celebrates 30 years of democracy, it's crucial to examine the evolving role of women in the workplace. From historical barriers to emerging opportunities, this feature article delves into the current state of women's employment, challenges, and trends influencing their participation in the South African job market.

Historical Context

Women in South Africa have faced numerous challenges in the world of work due to historical and systemic inequalities. During apartheid, racial and gender discrimination severely restricted women's access to education and employment opportunities. Despite the end of apartheid in 1994, the legacy of these barriers has persisted, influencing women's participation in the workforce.

Current Workforce Participation

In recent years, South African women have made significant strides in various sectors. According to Statistics South Africa, women's labor force participation has steadily increased, reaching approximately 47% in 2024. This growth is a testament to the efforts of women breaking through traditional gender roles and pursuing careers across diverse fields.

However, while progress has been made, disparities remain. Women are still underrepresented in leadership roles, with only 23% of executive positions held by women in listed companies. Additionally, women are more likely to be employed in lower-paying sectors and face a significant gender pay gap, earning approximately 20% less than their male counterparts.

Key Trends Influencing Women in the Workplace

1. Rise of Remote Work: The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated

ed the adoption of remote work, which has had a profound impact on women's employment. Remote work offers flexibility that can help women balance work and family responsibilities. However, it also highlights the digital divide and the need for supportive policies to ensure equitable access to remote work opportunities.

- 2. Gender Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives:** There is a growing focus on gender diversity and inclusion within South African companies. Many organizations are implementing policies aimed at closing the gender gap, such as mentorship programs, flexible work arrangements, and diversity training. These initiatives are crucial for creating more inclusive workplaces and supporting women's career advancement.
- 3. Entrepreneurship and Innovation:** Women-led entrepreneurship is on the rise, with many South African women starting their own



businesses. This trend is driven by a desire for greater control over their careers and the need to overcome barriers in traditional employment. Government initiatives and support programs are increasingly focused on fostering female entrepreneurship, which is vital for economic growth and job creation.

4. Educational Advancements: Access to education has improved,

with more women pursuing higher education and vocational training. This trend is reflected in the growing number of women entering fields previously dominated by men, such as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). Educational advancements are key to equipping women with the skills needed to compete in a rapidly evolving job market.

5. Workplace Safety and Harassment: Addressing workplace safety and harassment remains a critical issue. Despite legal frameworks in place to protect workers, many women continue to face harassment and unsafe working conditions. Efforts to create safer and more respectful workplaces are essential for ensuring women's full participation and success in the workforce.

Challenges and Areas for Improvement

While there are positive trends, several challenges still need to be addressed:

- **Gender Pay Gap:** Persistent wage disparities between men and women require targeted policies and enforcement to ensure fair compensation for equal work.
- **Access to Leadership Roles:** Strategies to support women's advancement into senior leadership

positions are needed to achieve gender parity at the top levels of organizations.

- **Support for Working Mothers:** Policies that support working mothers, such as affordable childcare and parental leave, are crucial for enabling women to balance work and family responsibilities effectively.

The journey of women in the South African workforce is one of progress and

ongoing struggle. As the country celebrates its democratic milestones, it is imperative to continue addressing the barriers that women face and to foster an environment where their contributions are fully recognized and valued. By embracing trends and implementing effective policies, South Africa can ensure that women's participation in the workforce continues to grow and thrive, contributing to a more equitable and prosperous society.

KZN CIGFARO Hosts Gala Dinner and Awards Ceremony to Honor Outstanding Municipal Achievements

KZN Cigfaro in partnership with KZN COGTA, SALGA, National Treasury and office of the Auditor General hosted a Gala dinner and awards Ceremony to recognize and celebrate outstanding achievements in municipality and provide a platform for networking and engagement.

The awards were based on a criteria which looked at audit outcome, funding status, debt collection rate, cost cash coverate, current ration, surplus/deficit, grants cash backed and going concern of the municipality

Below are the overall municipalities that be received awards as per category:-

- Clean Audit Municipalities
- Most improved Municipalities
- Financial Management

Clean Audit Municipalities

- Okhahlamba Municipality
- Umlalazi Municipality
- King Cetshwayo District Municipality
- City of uMhlathuze

Most Improved Municipalities

- Umlalazi Municipality
- Nguthu Municipality
- eMadlangeni Municipality



- uLundi Municipality
- Harry Gwala District Municipality

Overall financial Management

- Umshwathi Municipality
- Mkhambathini Municipality
- Richmond Municipality
- Alfred Duma Municipality
- Okhahlamba Municipality
- Nauthu Municipality
- Big Five Hlabisa Municipality

- City of uMhlathuze Ubuhlebezwe Municipality Umzimkhulu Local Municipality

These awards not only recognised great performance but the aim it to encourage and improve sound financial

Reporting for municipal sustainable growth towards improved audit outcomes



South Africa's 'Renewable Energy Revolution' a Tantalising Prospect

President Cyril Ramaphosa has heralded South Africa's "renewable energy revolution" as a pivotal force for significant growth and job creation over the next decade and beyond.

Delivering the Opening of Parliament Address (OPA) at the Cape Town City Hall on Thursday evening, Ramaphosa emphasized South Africa's climatic advantage, which allows the country to harness solar and wind energy. Additionally, the nation boasts an abundance of rare earth minerals crucial for renewable energy technologies.

"As we undertake a just transition towards renewable energy, South Africa must create a green manufacturing sector centered on the export of green hydrogen and associated products, electric vehicles, and renewable energy components," Ramaphosa stated.

He highlighted the Northern Cape as a prime example, which has already attracted billions of Rands in renewable energy investments. "South Africa is undergoing a renewable energy revolution that is expected to be the most significant driver of growth and job creation in the next decade

and beyond," the President said.

The government has also been proactive in opening opportunities for renewable energy independent power producers to not only strengthen the grid but also create employment opportunities. "We already have a huge pipeline of renewable energy projects, representing over 22,500 MW of new generating capacity, estimated to be worth around R400 billion in new private investment. Investments such as these will create many jobs," Ramaphosa added.

He noted a recent milestone with the largest-ever private energy project connecting to the grid

near Lichtenburg in the North West, featuring over 390,000 solar panels and adding 256 MW to the grid. "We will see more of these projects taking shape across our country in the months and years to come. As these investments reach fruition, more jobs will be created," he concluded.



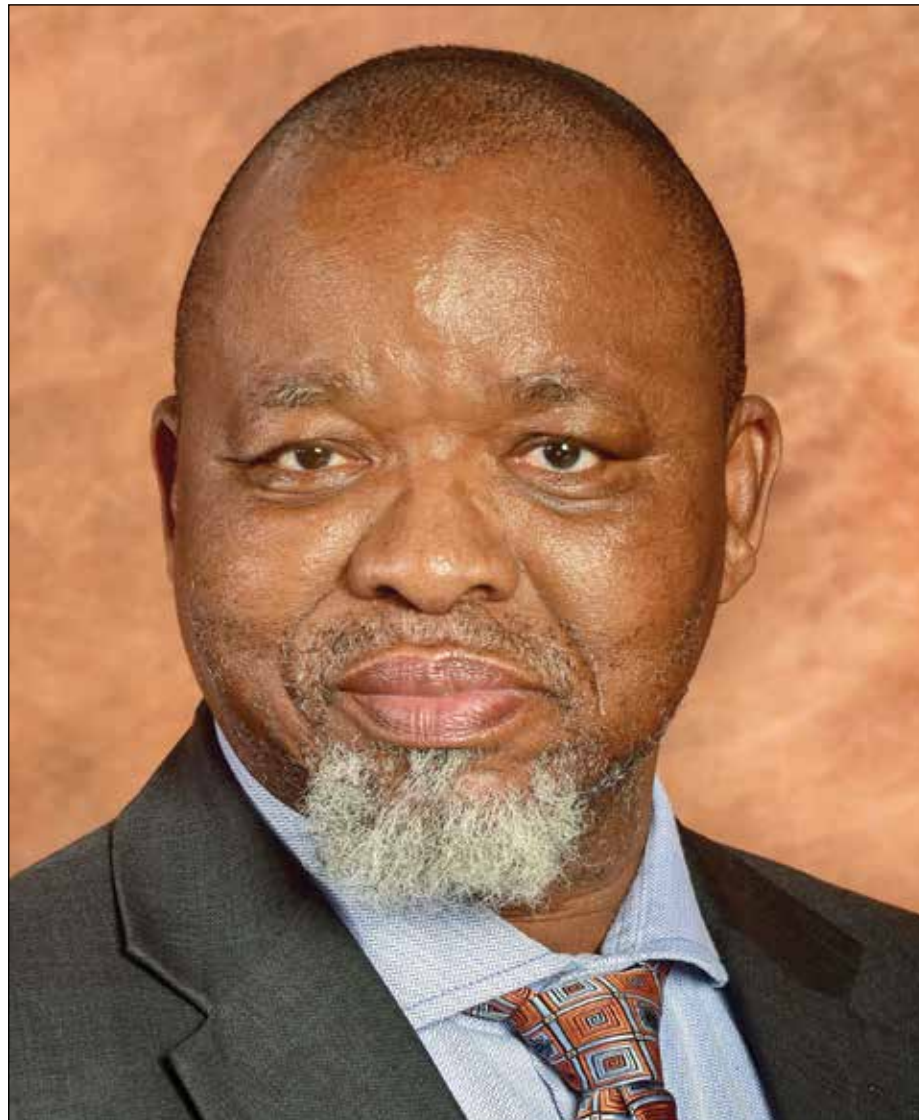
Gas and Oil Exploration Essential for South Africa's Economic Growth, Says Minister Gwede Mantashe

Cape Town, 19 July 2024 – The Minister of Minerals and Petroleum, Gwede Mantashe, has underscored the pivotal role of gas and oil exploration in securing South Africa's economic future. Speaking during a debate on the Opening of Parliament Address, Mantashe detailed how harnessing the nation's petroleum resources could significantly reshape the economic landscape.

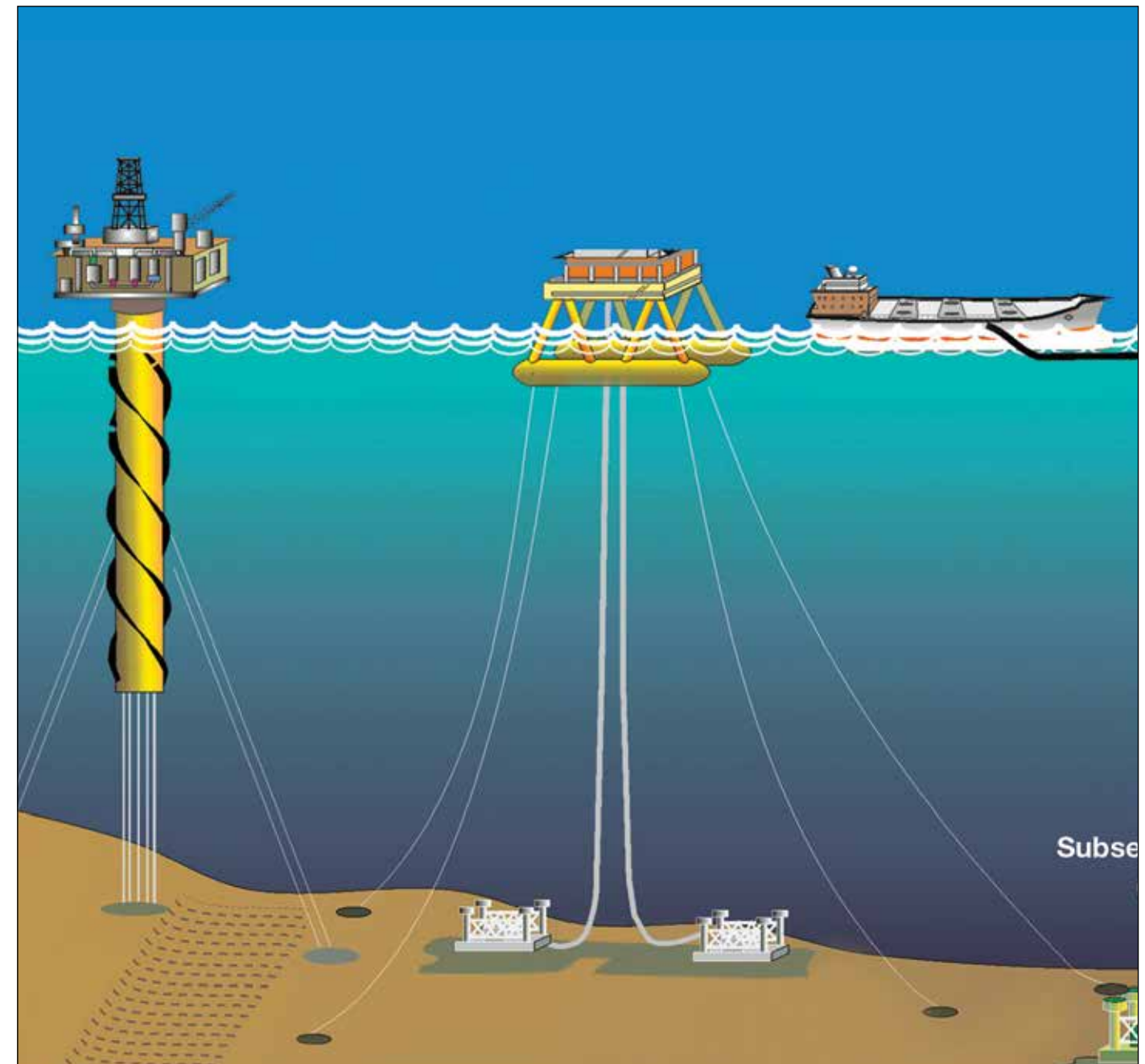
"Our country is endowed with petroleum deposits that are not yet exploited. We appeal to South Africans to appreciate that our quest for exploration of oil and gas deposits is not a 'nice to have,'" Mantashe asserted. "It is important to turnaround the composition of our economy, and this will translate into economic growth."

Challenges from Foreign-Funded NGOs

Mantashe expressed frustration with "foreign-funded NGOs" that he claims obstruct gas and oil exploration efforts. He argued that these organizations impede economic progress and stressed the need to overcome these barriers. "These NGOs are blocking economic development, and we must confront and deal with this issue. That doesn't mean we are not serious about re-



sponsible mining and exploration. We must accept, unreservedly, the need for mining and exploration that is conscious of preserving the environment while accelerating development," he stated.



Environmental Responsibility

Despite his strong advocacy for increased exploration, the Minister emphasized the importance of balancing development with environmental stewardship. He assured that the government is committed to responsible mining practices that protect the environment.

Economic Empowerment

Mantashe also highlighted the significance of black economic empowerment in South Africa's growth strategy.

He emphasized that addressing unemployment and developing an economic growth framework must include empowering black South Africans. "As we address the question of unemployment and develop a framework for economic growth, we should bear in mind that involving black South Africans in economic activity is not a favor. It is a necessary intervention because for many years, they were not active in economic activity. Therefore, the question of black economic empowerment and affirmative action is a necessary inter-

vention in the economy," he stated.

Minister Mantashe's remarks underscore a dual commitment to economic development and environmental sustainability, while also focusing on inclusive growth that empowers historically marginalized communities. As South Africa moves forward with its exploration efforts, the balance between development and preservation, along with ensuring equitable economic participation, will be crucial in shaping the nation's future.



Analysis: Climate Transition and the Just Transition Financing Mechanism

The recent Climate Resilience Symposium, officially opened by President Cyril Ramaphosa, highlighted the critical challenges and opportunities presented by South Africa's climate transition. This transition, while essential for sustainable development, is expected to create significant economic disruptions. Recognizing these challenges, the National Treasury and the Presidential Climate

Commission (PCC) have joined forces to address them through the Just Transition Financing Mechanism (JTfM), aiming to smooth the transition while promoting social equity.

The JTfM, as outlined in the PCC's Recommendations Report, seeks to overcome financial barriers by mobilizing and effectively allocating resources to projects that foster community empowerment, alternative

livelihoods, economic diversification, and skills development. However, several market failures and challenges complicate this process. One major issue is the lack of standardized definitions and metrics, which hampers the integration of just transition goals into project development and investment strategies. Traditional economic models often overlook the sustainability costs associated with these transition projects.

Furthermore, many just transition projects involve complex risk profiles that traditional financing institutions are reluctant to support. The high transaction costs associated with smaller projects also make them less attractive to investors. The mismatch between the long-term capital needs of just transition projects and the short-term investment horizons common in the finance sector exacerbates the difficulty of securing adequate funding.

To address these challenges, the JTfM proposes several immediate actions. Establishing a project preparation facility is crucial for supporting projects from initial concept through to implementation, including building local government capacity for developing credible project pipelines. The creation of the JET Investment Plan Funding Platform over the next 18 months will be instrumental in match-

ing and preparing projects in line with the Just Energy Transition Investment Plan (JETIP). As the PCC monitors and tracks progress, it will refine strategies based on lessons learned.

Efforts to support small, medium, and micro-sized enterprises (SMMEs) will be intensified, with a focus on utilizing grants and concessional finance to foster local economic development. National Treasury has a central role in this process, conducting a comprehensive fiscal review to assess how industrial, social, and labor market policies align with decarbonization and adaptation investments. Institutionalizing key functions within development finance institutions, such as the Industrial Development Corporation, National Empowerment Fund, and Development Bank of Southern Africa, will help address gaps in the just transition framework. This work will be complemented by the coordi-

nation efforts of the DFI CEOs Forum.

Looking ahead, the focus should be on establishing a robust Just Transition Financing Mechanism, a centrally coordinated institution tasked with capitalizing and mobilizing funds and developing innovative structures to support a range of just transition projects. Engaging international partners to secure additional, high-quality funding and exploring creative approaches to grant financing will be vital to scaling these initiatives effectively.

Overall, the JTfM marks a significant step forward in addressing climate change while ensuring social and economic justice. The recommendations from the symposium offer a pathway to overcome immediate functional gaps and implement necessary system-level reforms to enable effective financing for a just transition.



DFFE Champions Transformation in Biodiversity Sector for Economic Growth

The transformation of South Africa's biodiversity sector is not just a mandate but a vital strategy to bolster the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) while preserving invaluable natural resources. The Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE) has been at the forefront of this effort, making sig-

nificant strides in both conservation and sectoral transformation.

A landmark achievement in this journey is the recent revision of the National Biodiversity Economy Strategy (NBES). This strategy aims to foster an inclusive biodiversity sector that maximizes the local benefits of South Africa's rich indigenous biological and

genetic resources. The focus on transformation was a central theme at the 2024 Biodiversity Economy and Investment Indaba (BEII), held in March in Ekurhuleni, Gauteng.

With over 1,000 participants, the BEII emphasized the urgent need for transformation within the biodiversity sector. This transformation must

ENHANCING AND OPTIMISING SERVICE DELIVERY AT LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL

ensure the meaningful and equitable inclusion of rural communities and previously disadvantaged individuals in the biodiversity economy, conservation, and sustainable use.

The BEII aimed to enhance discussions on the NBES and its role in addressing poverty, unemployment, and inequality. It also sought to strengthen multi-stakeholder commitment to the biodiversity economy sector, fostering dialogue among industry players about the goals outlined in the White Paper on Conservation and Sustainable Use of South Africa's Biodiversity (2023). The Indaba promoted cooperative governance and a whole-of-society approach for effective policy implementation, business-to-business trading, networking, and sustainable partnerships. Additionally, it showcased market-ready biodiversity products and services from various value chains.

The revised NBES, aligned with the White Paper, is built on key pillars: conservation, sustainable use, beneficiation of biodiversity business value chains, and transformation. These pillars promote sustainable and inclusive socio-economic growth and development, requiring the expansion and maintenance of conservation land and seascapes while fostering inclusive biodiversity-based businesses.

South Africa's holistic approach to biodiversity acknowledges the economic and societal benefits of intact ecosystems, healthy species populations, and genetic diversity. The country aims to balance ecological, social, and economic elements, ensuring long-term sustainability rather than short-term exploitation of natural resources. This approach promotes equitable benefit-sharing and harmonious coexistence between people and nature.

Informed by the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the revised NBES expands its scope to include marine, coastal, estuarine, and freshwater opportunities. It also emphasizes ecosystem restoration and the importance of ecological infrastructure for sustainable coexistence of nature and people.

A key focus of the NBES is the inclusion of rural communities and previously disadvantaged individuals in the biodiversity economy, driving rural socio-economic development. Success stories like the Tshivhula Communal Property Association (CPA), the Makuleke in the Limpopo section of Kruger National Park, and Babanango in KwaZulu-Natal Province highlight the socio-economic benefits of land restitution and conservation businesses.

Tshivhula Game Farm-Ndou Safaris in Limpopo exemplifies the positive impact of such initiatives. With 20,000 hectares of land restored to the Tshivhula community, the farm has become a model of biodiversity stewardship, focusing on hunting and ecotourism. Support from national and provincial governments, public entities like South African National Parks (SANParks), and private investment has been crucial to its success.

The DFFE's efforts to showcase the success of Tshivhula Game Farm-Ndou Safaris highlight the department's achievements in sector transformation. Media representatives attending the BEII Post-Indaba Media Excursion engaged with the CPA, private partners, farm employees, SANParks officials, and DFFE officials. The excursion concluded with a visit to Mapungubwe National Park, a World Heritage Site, offering further engagement opportunities during a game drive and museum tour.

As South Africa advances under the 7th administration, the revised NBES provides a framework for growth and transformation in the biodiversity sector. By balancing conservation with sustainable use and ensuring inclusive socio-economic development, South Africa demonstrates the responsible use of natural resources for the benefit of all citizens, driving economic growth.



Minister Hlabisa Vows Transformation: Tough Measures for Failing Municipalities

CoGTA Minister Unveils Bold Plans and Major Financial Commitments to Revitalize South Africa's Distressed Municipalities

Minister Velenkosini Hlabisa's Budget Vote Speech on July 17, 2024, demonstrated a resolute stance on addressing the pervasive issues within South Africa's local municipalities. The newly appointed Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) Minister articulated a clear vision for rejuvenating dysfunctional municipalities, signaling a commitment to substantial reforms and strategic interventions.

Acknowledgment of Challenges

Hlabisa's candid acknowledgment of the severe challenges faced by local municipalities sets a tone of transparency and accountability. His statement, "Some have struggled to pay salaries over the past three to six months. Some have debts that seem insurmountable as well as prolonged and expensive litigation," highlights the dire financial and operational crises plaguing certain municipalities. By identifying Ditso-botla, Kopanong, Mafube, Emfuleni, and Thabazimbi as key areas of concern, Hlabisa underscores the administration's focus on the most distressed regions.

Strategic Interventions

The Minister outlined a multi-faceted approach to municipal recovery, emphasizing the implementation and enforcement of Municipal Support and Intervention Plans (MSIPs) and financial recovery plans.

His commitment to prioritizing eThekweni Metro and other severely distressed municipalities signifies a targeted strategy aimed at restoring governance and service delivery. The support from the national government and KwaZulu-Natal CoGTA for eThekweni further illustrates a collaborative effort to address these challenges.

Financial Commitment

The substantial allocation of R395.7 billion for Cooperative Governance, with 95.9% (R379.61 billion) designated for municipalities and affiliated entities, reflects the administration's financial commitment to local government recovery. The earmarking of funds for the local government equitable share, disaster relief grant, and municipal infrastructure grant highlights a comprehensive plan to address both immediate and long-term needs.

Role of Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent (MISA)

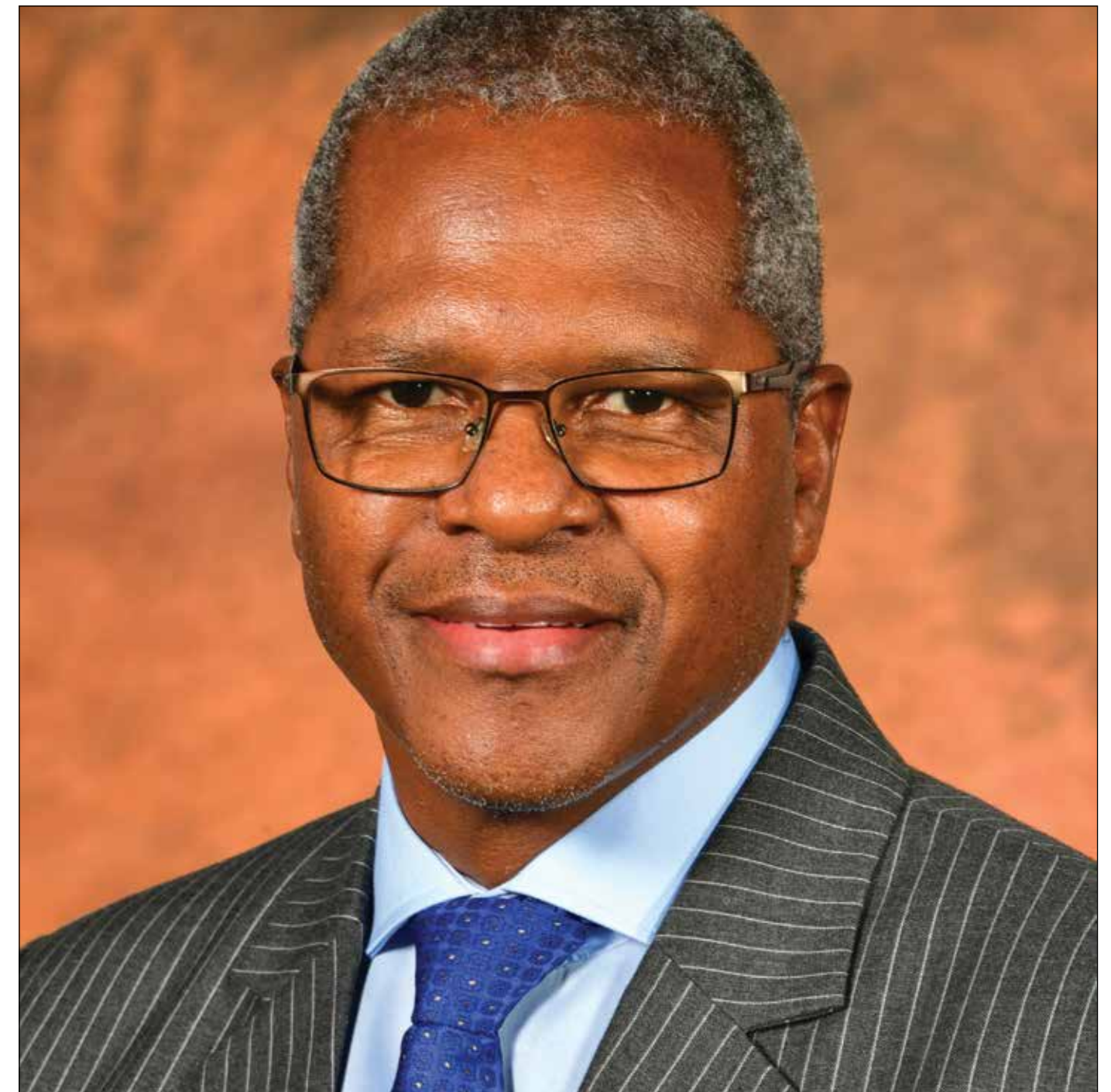
Hlabisa's emphasis on the Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent (MISA) underscores the critical need for infrastructure investments in distressed municipalities. His acknowledgment of the difficulties in mobilizing resources due to borrowing limitations and reduced national transfers amid fiscal constraints is a realistic appraisal of the obstacles ahead. The support for 22 distressed municipalities indicates a proactive stance in ensuring essential service delivery.

Collaborative Efforts for Success

The Minister's call for collective efforts from Parliament, departments, municipalities, traditional leaders, civil society, and citizens emphasizes a holistic approach to governance. Hlabisa stated, "We cannot sit on the sidelines whilst the taxpayers' money is not used as planned and infrastructure that could benefit our communities remains a dream," reinforcing the need for cohesive and concerted action.

Traditional Leadership Support

Hlabisa also addressed the importance of traditional leadership, particularly the



Khoi-San community. His support for these institutions and the allocation of R187.3 million, despite a slight reduction from the previous year, indicates a commitment to preserving cultural heritage and ensuring effective integration with municipal governance. The continued support for the Commission on Khoi-San Matters (CKSM) to finalize the recognition of Khoi-San leaders demonstrates an ongoing effort to address historical and cultural issues.

Forward-Looking Perspective

Hlabisa's reminder of the impending 2026 Local Government Elections serves as a call to action for improved service delivery and governance. His assertion, "We owe it to our communities to better their lives through effective and impactful service delivery," encapsulates the administration's dedication to meaningful and lasting improvements in local government.

Minister Velenkosini Hlabisa's Budget Vote Speech is a decisive and comprehensive outline of the seventh administration's strategy to tackle the entrenched problems within South Africa's municipalities. His focus on financial recovery, infrastructural support, and collaborative governance, coupled with a strong emphasis on traditional leadership, sets a robust foundation for addressing the multifaceted challenges facing local municipalities.

Midvaal Rated the Most Financially Sustainable Municipality for the Third Consecutive Year

Midvaal Local Municipality has been recognized as the most financially sustainable municipality for the third consecutive year by Ratings Afrika, tying for first place with Mossel Bay Municipality..

Ratings Afrika's annual Municipal Sustainability Index (MFSI) assessed 104 top-performing municipalities and eight metros for the 2023 financial year. Midvaal achieved a score of 74 out of 100, a two-point improvement from the previous year. This score places Midvaal among the few municipalities that achieve a score above 70, and it is the only municipality in Gauteng to do so. The other municipalities with high scores are in the Western Cape: Mossel Bay (74), Saldanha Bay (73), Swellendam (72), and Swartland (71).

Ratings Afrika evaluates financial sustainability based on sound long-term financial strategies, well-entrenched financial policies, self-funded operating and capital budgets, strict financial control and discipline, and efficient revenue collection, which is close to 96%. Financial sustainability is defined as a municipality's ability to deliver services and maintain infrastructure.

Midvaal Municipality welcomed the rating, with an administration committed to maintaining sound budget-



ary practices and stringent financial controls.

Midvaal Receives Tenth Consecutive Clean Audit

Midvaal Local Municipality has achieved its tenth unqualified audit opinion for the 2022/2023 financial year. The announcement was made by the office of the Auditor-General (AG) during a Special Council meeting held on January 29, 2024.

The municipality's financial statements, performance management, internal controls, and compliance efficiency were audited, with the AG confirming no material findings or misrepresentations in the financial records.

Executive Mayor Ald. Peter Teixeira expressed satisfaction with the audit outcome, stating, "Our administration

will continue to work hard to ensure that the clean audits result in tangible service delivery, such as infrastructure improvements, investment in safety, and uplifting our people in Midvaal." He emphasized that clean audits must translate into benefits that residents can experience.

Midvaal's vision is to be a well-governed, effectively managed, financially viable, and sustainable organization. The municipality is dedicated to maintaining its streak of clean audits, attracting investment for local economic growth, and creating opportunities for all. Safety and security investments remain a priority to keep residents safe.

The municipality remains committed to progress, economic growth, and a brighter future for all Midvaal residents.



Government Pushes for Affordable

Healthcare for All

Equitable, accessible, and affordable quality healthcare is set to be a top priority for South Africa's seventh administration over the next five years. President Cyril Ramaphosa, in his Opening of Parliament Address (OPA) at Cape Town City Hall, outlined the government's commitment to reducing the high cost of living by ensuring that everyone has equal access to healthcare.

"An important task of the next five years is to ensure that we also reduce the high cost of living by ensuring that everyone in South Africa has equal access to equitable, accessible, and affordable quality healthcare," said Ramaphosa.

As the government moves forward with implementing the National Health Insurance (NHI), Ramaphosa highlighted that the state would focus on strengthening healthcare infrastructure, enhancing the training of healthcare personnel, and utilizing technology to improve healthcare management. Despite the debates surrounding the NHI, there is broad agreement on leveraging resources from both the public and private sectors to meet the healthcare needs of all South Africans equally.

"In implementing the NHI, we are confident that we will be able to bring stakeholders together, and that we will be able to resolve differences and clarify misunderstandings," Ramaphosa stated.

Health Minister Dr. Aaron Motsoaledi echoed the President's sentiments in his Budget Vote Speech, emphasizing



ing the department's commitment to phased implementation of the NHI, which is already in phase 2. Motsoaledi underscored the urgency of addressing the stark inequalities in the health sector, noting that South Africa is one of the most unequal so-

cieties in the world.

"If you want to see what inequality means, come to the health sector in South Africa. Within the borders of the same country, some are getting world-class healthcare, while others

get such poor healthcare you may believe we live in different countries," he said.

Motsoaledi called on Members of Parliament to engage in constructive discussions about the NHI instead of dis-

missing the initiative. He emphasized that gross inequality in the health sector is unsustainable and that the NHI is a necessary step towards universal health coverage (UHC) as recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO).

The Minister outlined his priorities for the next five years, focusing on six building blocks identified by the WHO: leadership, governance, access to essential medicine, the health workforce, health systems financing, information systems, and service delivery. He acknowledged that while most of these building blocks are widely accepted, health systems financing, under the banner of NHI, has sparked significant debate.

Motsoaledi addressed concerns about the country's readiness and financial capacity for the NHI, asserting that South Africa has already allocated 8.5% of its GDP to health, surpassing the WHO's recommendation of 5%. Despite this, he noted the disparity in resource allocation, with 51% of health resources serving only 14% of the population while the remaining 49% caters to 86% of the population. "This needs to stop now."

While there is support for the NHI, there are those who do not support it in its current form. Fair enough, but we cannot throw the baby away with the bathwater. Let us discuss which areas need to be ironed out but let us not be obstacles to what poor people have been waiting for close to a century," Motsoaledi urged.

As South Africa embarks on this transformative journey towards universal healthcare, the government's commitment to equitable, accessible, and affordable healthcare for all remains steadfast. The NHI promises to be a significant step towards bridging the healthcare divide and ensuring that every citizen receives the quality care they deserve.

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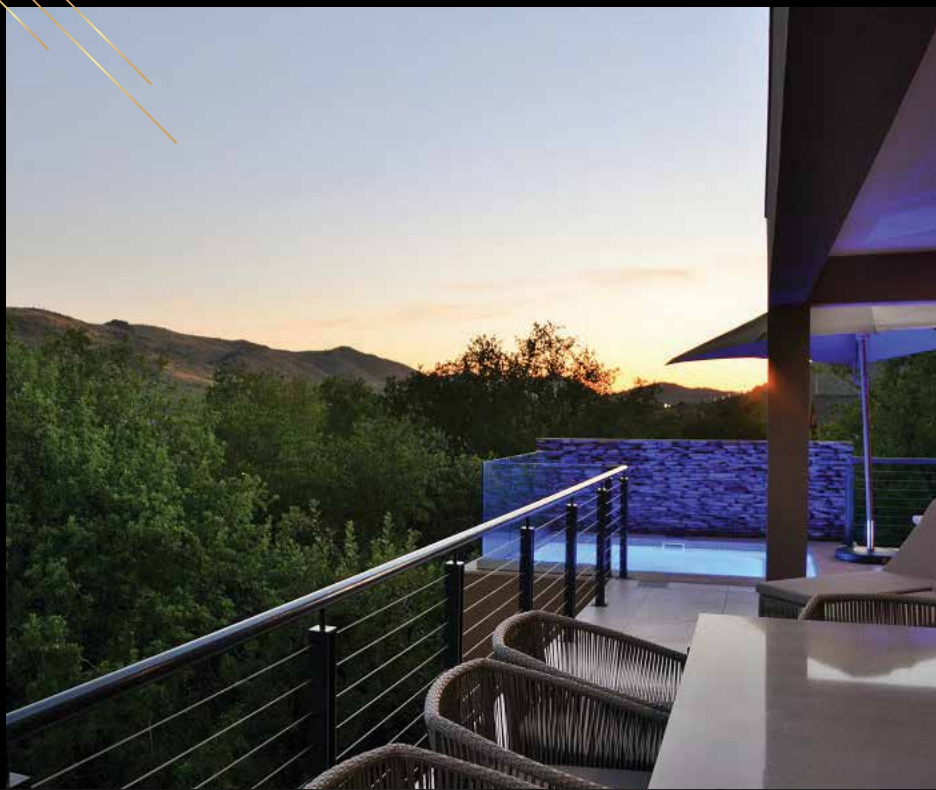
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