

COMPREHENSIVE, ALL-INCLUSIVE, PRECISE AND UNFILTERED GAUTENG BUDGET VOTE SPEECH AND PRIORITIES FOR 2023/2024 FINANCIAL YEAR AS UNLEASHED BY COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS MEC MZIKAYIFANI KHUMALO AT THE GAUTENG PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

Newly appointed (COGTA) MEC, Mzikayifani (Mzi) Khumalo recently discharged his department's Budget vote speech and priorities for the financial year 2023/2024t at the Gauteng Provincial Legislature .

**Speaking in staccato style, he cleverly addressed all the hot potato issues and challenges faced by the Gauteng Population including the instability in civic politics that has seen the changing and chopping of Executive Mayors of the Metropolitan Municipalities in the province. Political analyst in the media space have labelled this conundrum a fashionable trend and a mission possible fiasco that will become a story of our lives in civic politics**

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Cooperative governance means that the three spheres of government should work together (cooperate) to provide citizens with a comprehensive package of services. The Constitution states that the three spheres have to assist and support each other, share information and coordinate their efforts.

National primary mandate for COGTA is to:

- Develop and monitor the implementation of the national policy and legislation, seeking to transform and strengthen key institutions and mechanisms of governance to fulfil their developmental role.
- Develop, promote and monitor mechanisms, systems and structures to enable integrated service delivery and implementation within government.
- Promote sustainable development by providing support to and exercising oversight over provincial and local government.

### **READ BELOW ATTACHED FULL BUDGET VOTE SPEECH PUBLISHED AS AN ADVERTORIAL.**

Honourable Speaker;

Honourable Deputy Speaker;

Honourable Premier;

Honourable colleagues in the Executive Council;

Honourable members of this House;

Chief of the Majority Party (ANC),

Honourable Lesego Makhubela Leaders from labour, Business and Communities;

Ladies and Gentlemen; the People of Gauteng.

Madam Speaker, It is an honour to deliver this budget vote for 2023/24 financial year.

This budget vote comes amidst debilitating power cuts and instability in municipalities.

The milestones we have achieved can easily be overshadowed by these plaguing issues.

During this Africa Day Celebration, we are reminded of words of wisdom on African Unity by Kwame Nkrumah, 'it is clear that we must find an African solution to our problems, and that this can only be found in African Unity; divided we are weak, united Africa could become one of the greatest forces in the world'.

Honourable Members, We are about to begin the last full financial year of the 6th administration of the Gauteng Provincial Government, and it is therefore imperative that the focus of the Gauteng City Region be on improving services and living conditions of the people in Townships, Informal Settlements, and Hostels (TISH).

Responding to the need to move forward, our immediate task is to stabilize local government and manage coalitions. The 6th Administration is committed to working with the people of Gauteng to implement a programme (five elevated priorities) intended to;

Accelerate economic recovery.

Strengthen the battle against crime, corruption, vandalism, and lawlessness.

Improve health and wellness of communities.

Strengthen the capacity of the state to deliver services. Focus on incomplete Infrastructure projects.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to say that we have done much to implement the commitments we made to the people of Gauteng. However, and not unexpectedly, we still have outstanding work to do.

We are not oblivious to the challenges and tasks ahead of us, we are driven by the desire to make service delivery not only an ideal but a lived experience of the people.

Our fight is for the emancipation of our people from the bondage of lack of services in their communities. On this Africa Day, we draw our inspiration from a revered statesmen and freedom Fighter O R Tambo who once remarked that "The fight for freedom must go on until it is won; until our country is free and happy and peaceful as part of the community of man, we cannot rest".

As custodians of local government and service delivery in the province, our responsibility is to ensure that municipalities discharge their constitutional mandate and responsibilities. This budget vote is a continuation of our commitment to building a people centred, capable and ethical state. For the financial 2023/24 the department has been allocated R 639 686 000 (six hundred and thirty-nine million six hundred and eighty-six thousand) which is an increase of 5% from the R 610 789 000 allocated during the 2022/23 financial year.

Honourable Speaker,

The R276 463 000 (two hundred and seventy-six million four hundred and sixty three thousand) is allocated for local government support.

This represent 45% of the overall budget, which is the highest allocation. This allocation is for grant transfers to municipalities to support service delivery, assist municipalities to achieve positive audit outcomes and strengthen the firefighting capacities of municipalities.

A further R165 052 000 (one hundred sixty-five million and fifty-two thousand) is set aside for administration, which includes funding studies on the viability of municipalities. We have allocated R148, 926 000 (one hundred forty-eight million and nine hundred and twenty-six thousand) for Development Planning to assist municipalities to implement the District Development Model (DDM) to enable integrated planning at municipal level and to bring stability in municipalities.

To support the institutions of traditional leadership and the management thereof we have allocated R20 346 000 (twenty million three hundred and forty-six thousand).

Madam Speaker, A greater sense of urgency fuels our determination to build the economy and improve infrastructure.

Building a viable municipal infrastructure for effective and efficient delivery of services to communities is a key driver of the much-needed inclusive growth and sustainable development. As a responsive and people-centred government we have responded to the sewer challenges in the West Rand.

The Hillhaven Outfall Sewer project intervention, which is a Municipal Infrastructure Grant project, when completed, it will benefit over 5000 households.

The economic impact of the Covid-19 Global pandemic has negatively impacted on municipal revenue further hindering their capacity to deliver services to the communities.

### **Madam Speaker**

The Department continues to capacitate municipalities on a differentiated approach to collect revenue and manage their debt. Support was given to Rand West and Mogale City Local Municipalities in electricity and water (users) accurate billing system.

The support included the actual revenue collection methods, efficient ways of resolving queries, protocols in follow ups & disconnections.

The whole exercise amounted to R194.6m collected. 210 accounts with no street address valued at R751m and 366 accounts with no owner details valued at R778m were corrected. Collection rates increased from an average of 77% to 94% for Mogale City and from 72% to 99% for Randwest City specifically on the large users.

Government Debt Reduction Strategy was implemented in nine Municipalities except the districts. The success of the strategy has resulted in improved communication and relationships between government departments and municipalities as well reduction in the disconnection of critical services.

The Auditor General's (AG) findings in previous financial years highlighted amongst others that municipalities are plagued with poor governance and lack of accountability. CoGTA in response to AG initiated the Accountability and Ethical Conduct Training to capacitate municipal officials and councillors with the goal of providing knowledge and understanding on anti-corruption issues in the public sector.

### **Honourable Members**

We have witnessed instability in the local government in our Province. We are continuously working with municipalities to strengthen conflict resolution capacity in coalition governments across Gauteng.

The stability of the administration should withstand the changes in the council's political leadership. There is an initiative at the provincial level, to review current policy frameworks applicable to coalitions with a view to understand gaps and propose policy options and positions moving forward including the issue of whether the manner of constituting these coalitions is consistent with the democratic principles and values of our constitution.

We have finalised the Report on the study on the impact of coalition governments in the municipalities of Gauteng Province, this report will guide our work as we undertake a review of governance model in our municipalities.

Madam Speaker

We believe that the provision of individual and organizational capacity support and development in 11 Gauteng municipalities will improve municipal performance and enhance service delivery. We are in the process of training Community Development Workers (CDWs) to further entrench the Ward Based Approach.

CDWs have social contract with the communities to facilitate government programmes and enabling them to bring departments to be accountable at a local level.

The Department is finalizing the review of the Gauteng Spatial Development Framework to strengthen and guide our sector department so that they can invest in the right places to fast-track spatial transformation and maximise our impact. We are also strengthening our support role to municipalities on the implementation of IDPs and the DDM in collaboration with Provincial Treasury and the Office of the Premier.

Part of CoGTA's work is to ensure that people participate in the systems of democracy. This is an indictment on democratic system. Voter apathy was evident in the historically low turnout during the 2021 local government elections. As part of strengthening democracy, we will implement a comprehensive civic education programme to create awareness, promote voter registration and voting itself.

We will be in conversation with the communities on the importance of strengthening democracy. Indeed, as government, we are resetting our research agenda at the centre of local government.

Cultural heritage forms an integral part of our social fibre and must be preserved. CoGTA continues to support the two institutions of traditional leadership in the province.

Great strides have already been made in the implementation of policies, norms and standards, systems, and regulatory framework in the scope of Traditional affairs. The type of support given includes training and capacity building programs.

The Commission on Traditional Leadership Disputes and Claims in Gauteng was launched by the Premier of Gauteng on 22 November 2022.

The mandate of the commission is to resolve claims and disputes guided by the claims register. Therefore, this Commission, is an indication that Gauteng Government remains committed to strengthening the institution of traditional leadership and appreciates the role it plays in nation building.

The Commission is currently in the process of addressing the claims and disputes from traditional communities across the Gauteng province.

The Provincial Disaster Management Centre (PDMC) finalised the provincial risk profile and currently in the process of aligning its risk management strategies to the indicative risk profile.

PDMC is also working with municipalities and sector departments in the province to review their risk management strategies.

CoGTA recently embarked on an initiative to support under resourced municipalities to improve the performance of fire services. This support is through the provision of funds to procure firefighting equipment and vehicles.

The support that was provided to West Rand District Municipality in the past financial year amounted to R13, 550m. Meanwhile Emfuleni and Lesedi Local Municipalities received R12m each. Support provided to Midvaal Local Municipality in the past financial year is R10m.

CoGTA will continue with conducting fire safety and disaster related education and awareness programmes and installation of smoke alarm detectors in informal settlements. The intensified rolling blackouts continue to undermine Provincial Government's efforts to strengthen the province's energy security that is required to support the GGT2030 vision.

The Premier's Energy Emergency Council (PEEC) has developed an Energy Crisis Response Plan, which was endorsed by EXCO Lekgotla.

The province also convened its inaugural Energy EXPO in February 2023, engaging key stakeholders in the energy sector.

### **Madam Speaker**

Whilst the province is not assigned the legislative mandate on Energy, COGTA Gauteng through Section 154 is mandated to provide and facilitate support and has established an Energy Technical Task Team.

The Gauteng Energy Security Strategy seeks to build a resilient and energy secure province. The strategy is made up of six (6) pillars which include enhancing security of supply.

The SOPA priority projects include among others the Merafong Solar farm, solar at GPG offices, and increased capacity from Kelvin and Rooival Power stations.

Engagements with banking sector, power producers, large power users, research institutions, municipalities and others has taken place to find possible solutions to the energy crisis in the province.

Furthermore, the province has set up a Project Management Office at the level of Members of the Executive Council (MECs) aimed at further exploring other means of dealing with this challenge.

### **Honourable Members**

During the 2023 State of the Province Address, in response to the sinkholes in Merafong, Gauteng Premier pronounced the establishment of Permanent Emergency Disaster Management Centre in Merafong to centralize the multi sectoral rapid response to the challenges of sinkholes and associated service delivery challenges and for the community to have easy access to emergency services.

We have managed to mobilise all departments and private sector including the mining community and the business sector for an integrated response.

The Emergency Disaster Site will serve as a focal point for disaster management coordination in Merafong Municipality to;

- Provide rapid response to sinkhole challenges and enhance disaster response capacity in the municipality
- Coordinate stakeholders to play their role in all phases of sinkhole response interventions
- Ensure functional relationship with organs of state, civil society, and other interest parties
- Promote proactive integrated risk management planning and resource mobilisation.

Honourable Members

We remain committed to re-building and renewing a capable and developmental state, to re-organizing the way government interacts with the people, to rebuilding and improving local government, and to improving public accountability and responsiveness to the needs and concerns of the people.

Madam speaker

We convey our heartfelt condolences to the families who lost their loved ones in Hammanskraal; this is a serious indictment on all of us.

We should avoid the blame game and rather focus find lasting solutions. In this regard we call for calm but most importantly, for cooperation of all spheres of Government (IGR Sectors). the Private Sector and Communities to work together to solve this huge problem.

We fully appreciate the enormity of the challenges, but we are more determined to deliver to the people of Gauteng. We will spare no effort to improve the quality of lives of all our citizens in the province.

I wish to express my gratitude to the Head of Department, Dr Darion Barclay, his collective in the management team and the entire CoGTA staff and my Office for the hard work and dedication in service to our people.

Dr Barclay has just joined us a few months ago already there is a noticeable improvement in the work of the department in improving service delivery system in the province. Madam Speaker, I hereby present the 2023/24 Budget Vote of the Gauteng Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs.

**PLEASE NOTE THIS IS AN ADVERTORIAL AND PAID CONTENT.**