SPEECH BY GAUTENG MEC FOR COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS, E-GOVERNMENT, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, MR MZI KHUMALO, ON THE OCCASION OF THE DELIVERY OF THE 2023/24 BUDGET VOTE FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF E- GOVERNMENT, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT AT GAUTENG PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE ON THE 25th May 2023.

INTRODUCTION

Madam Speaker, we hereby present the 2023/24 Budget Vote for the Gauteng Department of e-Government. We are also taking into consideration that we are in the last year of the 6th Administration. This budget vote is presented on the occasion of Africa Day, as E-government we take solace that our mandate has always been integrally part of who we are as Africans. To this end Cheikh Anta Diop said, *"The ancestors of the Blacks, who today live mainly in Black Africa, were the first to invent mathematics, astronomy, the calendar, arts, religion, agriculture, social organisation, medicine, writing, technique, architecture".* This is confirmation African Indigenous Knowledge system has always been deployed to provide solutions to the people.

E-government, continue to dedicate itself to improving the lives of the residents of Gauteng and it has been *tasked to provide technology solutions in providing services which includes dealing decisively with the scourge of crime in Gauteng*. In achieving its mandate, the Department will be launching an initial project of CCTV surveillance before the end of May 2023 in Diepsloot. Madam Speaker, Diepsloot is one of the areas that has been identified as a crime hotspot. This project of *CCTV surveillance systems cameras* should enable the police to monitor the area on a 24-hour basis. This project will highlight the capabilities of the CCTV surveillance systems cameras of producing data which can be used fighting crime. In addition, drones and the e-Panic Button will be deployed, as part of government's effort to reduce the levels of crime in the area.

The Department has piloted the online *e-Panic Button* project for the Gauteng Province with 8000 employees (nurses and teachers) who have been identified as some of the most vulnerable citizens and therefore more susceptible to crime. The e-Panic Button provides anyone in distress with access to law enforcement and emergency health services at the touch of a button. This e-Panic Button application is currently available for download from Android and IOS App stores.

Honourable members,

The *mandate of the Department remains the digitisation of public services*. As government, it *must continuously improve access of our services to our citizens.* Our role is critical in providing access to all government services to citizens as well as to bridge the technology divide. The department has developed application that are available on our platforms to ensure that our citizens receive services at the tip of their fingers.

GBN (soon to be renamed Gauteng Wifi) Rollout

E-Gov has *provided Wide Area Network (WAN) connectivity to 1248 sites* through the Gauteng Broadband Network. These include schools, hospitals, community centres, libraries, and many other sites. In addition, through the rollout of the network, the Department has ensured end-to-end connectivity to various sites through connecting 697 Local Area Network (LAN) sites to the WAN and has *set up 39 sites Wi-Fi breakout points on GBN*.

Department has successfully connected six provincial government- owned hostels with Wifi including CCTV to ensure our people are able to access e-services.

The *Department has initiated the rollout of GBN Phase 3*. The Department is in the process of consolidating the new sites to be delivered in the 2023/24 financial year.

As we drive digitisation in the province, we *continue to improve governance and compliance in GPG through our cybersecurity detection, prevention, and awareness programmes*. In this regard, the *Department has facilitated and developed* several *ICT Frameworks* and *strategies* to *manage the ICT ecosystem of the province*. The *most significant* of these is the **Gauteng Growth and Digitisation Strategy** (4IR Strategy) which outlines the Plan of Action for the digitisation and modernisation of the province.

Honourable Members, *ICT skills development has been an essential part of the department's deliverables*. The Department has **played an active role in the provision** of **ICT skills development and training** to *SMME* (Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises), *GPG employees* as well as **communities in our TISH areas.** To date, 313 of township-based ICT entrepreneurs were supported through training and mentorship programmes and 23002 youth benefitted from ICT skills development programmes. Experiential learning opportunities were provided to 284 youth and 75 people benefitted from bursaries issues by the Department. A total of 16 606 GPG staff were trained through diverse types of ICT skills development programmes.

I must indicate Honourable Members that **youth, women and people with disabilities have benefitted from this initiative** and will continue to benefit as we embark on *establishing similar centres in our TISH areas*. As we speak, **we have started** in a small **informal settlement located in the West Rand called Orient Hills**, where the Centre will be essential to provide key ICT skills for the people in the area.

Madam speaker, it is important for me to also mention the *establishment of the e-Waste Management system for the Province* in 2022. The e-Waste Management System is capacitated with drop off sites, training programmes for the youth as well as strategic partnerships. These have ensured that it becomes a sustainable and effective programme for the province, generating jobs and income for the poor in our province.

Just recently, the *Department hosted ICT expos for the youth, called Youth Tech Expo events held across the 5 regions* of Gauteng aimed at driving digital transformation within Townships, Informal Settlements and Hostels. These ICT expos were attended by several young people and through our Private Public Partnerships, we ensured that the youth receive opportunities such as employment and training.

BUDGET ALLOCATED AND KEY PROJECTS

Madam Speaker, this then brings me to present our allocated budget and key projects for the 2023 / 2024 financial year. The *budget allocated* to the *Department of e-Government is just over R1.7 billion.*

With the *allocated budget*, *greater priority has been given to support ICT projects*, particularly *those that are linked to the elevated priorities of the Department* such as the continued rollout of the **Gauteng Broadband Network** and the *development and implementation of crime fighting technologies.*

MODERNISED ICT INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONNECTIVITY

Madam Speaker, the **Gauteng Broadband Network (GBN) is amongst our flagship programmes** that has *provided connectivity to government institutions in Gauteng.* The

network provides fast and sustainable connectivity that has improved the deployment and function of service delivery systems. The ***department will continue to expand the programme to new sites whilst maintaining existing connectivity across GPG*** by rolling out phase 3 of the Gauteng Broadband Network (GBN) in partnership with State Information Technology Agency (SITA).

A total of 300 sites will be provided with Wide Area Network (WAN); and continue the reduction of telephone costs for GPG departments and entities. The Department will enable 200 Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) sites on the network. In addition, to ensure end-to-end connectivity, the Department will rollout Local Area Network (LAN) connectivity to 250 sites whilst 100 Wi-fi hotspots will be provided in identified areas to provide wireless high-speed internet access. The Department will upgrade the two core network nodes during the MTEF period to ensure faster connectivity speeds across the Network.

DIGITAL PLATFORM, E-SERVICES AND APPLICATIONS

Applications development support and testing

The Department developed a common platform to provide a single window of government sector specific e-services, and further facilitated the continued development of e-Government mobile applications to improve the efficiency of provincial government in delivering services. We have had over **1 million** hits since 01 April 2022 and these numbers are growing. We are currently in process of improving the user experience through creating more efficiency in the backend. The department will develop 15 e-services these include **the Online IDP Assessments (COGTA), Fleet management Solution (G-Fleet), Athletics Management Solution (Sports), amongst others.**

Providing technological capability to fighting crime

With the new mandate that has been bestowed on e-Gov, the Department is currently in the market to source some of the service. These include:

- ***Technology for tracking of every registered Strategic Asset*** of the state, which includes amongst other, vehicles and firearms to reduce crime.
- ***Deploying CCTV surveillance*** across every major road, business centres and hotspot areas with potential crime in the province whilst prioritizing the TISH areas.
- Procuring ***High-Quality Drones*** for officials to operate and link information to law enforcement.
- The development of a ***payment engine for cashless transactions*** for all GPG departments and entities.

ICT security

To ensure confidentiality and integrity of Gauteng Provincial Government's ICT infrastructure, the ***Department has developed the provincial Cybersecurity Strategy.*** As a result, the Department aims to maintain 98% uptime of the Security Operations Centre.

Furthermore, the ***Department will implement Patch management to ensure proper monitoring of compliance on Patches and upgrade all systems*** in ensuring secure communication across the province.

Gauteng City Region Data Centre

A Gauteng City Region *Data Centre Strategy* regarding the establishment of GCR Data Centre by the Department *has been developed*. So far, the GCR ICT environment operates in silos with each of the Local Metropolitan and Municipal districts including Provincial Departments having their own Data Centre facilities and Disaster Recovery (DR) sites.

A *centralised GCR Data Centre facility* provided by e-Gov will be *established* while utilizing existing Data Centre facilities within the GCR for Disaster Recovery and systems redundancy. It is expected that a centralised data centre will reduce the total cost of ownership (TCO) of owning, leasing, managing and operating data centres within the GCR.

PROVINCIAL ICT OVERRSIGHT, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

For ICT function Monitoring, Measurement and Reporting, the *Department will develop three provincial ICT standards and 2 provincial life cycle road maps* in the coming financial year.

The department will continue to facilitate and coordinate contracts, business agreements and the review of 13 service level agreements for transversal applications.

Research Development & Innovation:

The Department of **E-government has been given a extended mandate to Grow ;Gauteng Using Innovation as a Catalyst for Development**, by **coordinating research and development focus in the province to building the Provincial System of Innovation to drive economic growth**.

E-government approach will be to use the current capabilities within the province, to ensure that digitalisation and innovation positions the government to create economic opportunities but also help in the fight against crime. Therefore, the **department will in this budget allocate funding to develop a framework to enable** the province to amongst other do **research on,** *Big Data Research*; *E-Commerce*; *Cybersecurity; Software Development* and *Connectivity.*

ICT INDUSTRY AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT STIMULATED

The Department will implement the *Gauteng ICT Skills Development Strategy* to *provide training to youth and government employees*. As a result, a total of 7 500 GPG staff will be trained on an online platform, and bursaries will also be made available to 70 beneficiaries to ensure that experienced people are re-skilled to balance demand and supply within the provincial digital ecosystem.

A total of *12 000 youth will benefit from ICT skills development* programme (*Action Lab Programme*) and *additional trainees will be placed for implementation of e-Waste project.*

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, ***I wish to express our commitment to fighting and combatting crime in our Province.*** We are collaborating with all the various departments to ensure that Gauteng is indeed a safe province to live in.

I would like to also ***appreciate our Honourable Premier Mr Panyaza Lesufi*** for providing us with the necessary leadership in fulfilling our mandate as e-Government.

Lastly, my thanks to the ***HOD, and the e-Government Staff and my office*** for your continued support towards the implementation the elevated projects in Growing Gauteng Together Strategy.

Madam Speaker, I would like to therefore, invite the house to adopt the budget as presented.

Please note! This is an advertorial. Additional information supplied by the department.