

Honourable Speaker Ms. Makhosazana Masilela

Honourable Deputy Speaker, Mr Sam Masango

Honourable Premier, Mr Mandla Ndlovu

Honourable Members of the Executive Council

Honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature

Chief Whip of the ANC, Hon. Eva Makhabane

Contralesa President and Chairperson of the Provincial House of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders, Kgoshi Mokoena

Traditional Leaders

Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee, Hon Dan Nkosi

Executive Mayors, Speakers, Chief Whips and Councillors

SALGA Chairperson, Cllr Walter Mngomezulu

Organised Labour

Director General, Ms Maggie Skosana

Acting Head of CoGHSTA, Mr. Sam Ngubane

Heads of Departments

ANC Provincial Secretary, Comrade Muzi Chirwa

Leaders of the Tripartite Alliance

Representatives of political Parties

Business Communities

Distinguished Guests

Members of the Media

Family and Friends

Ladies and Gentlemen

Greetings.

1. It is with deep humility, a profound sense of duty, and unwavering commitment that I rise to table the inaugural Budget Vote Speech of the newly established Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (CoGHSTA) in the Province of Mpumalanga.
2. I do so in the spirit of reflection and resolve, as this Budget Vote is tabled during Mandela Month; a period in which we are called upon to renew our pledge to serve, to build, and to uplift.
3. It is a time that reminds us of the enduring legacy of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, who taught us that public service must always place people at the centre of development.
4. Fittingly, we are guided by the timeless words of the Greek Philosopher Aristotle, who once asked: ***"What is the essence of life? To serve others and to do good."***
5. This is not only a moral imperative but a principle that must inform every rand we spend and every policy we pursue.
6. This occasion is also marked by a solemn moment in the history of our province. We gather here while still mourning the passing of former Deputy President David Dabede Mabuza, a son of the soil, a patriot, and a leader who served Mpumalanga and South Africa with diligence. We honour his memory by recommitting ourselves to the ideals he held dear such as unity, progress, and service to our people.
7. Equally worth remembering, is the former Legislature Chief Whip and owner of the erstwhile Witbank Aces Football Club, Mr Mahlangu.
8. He played a huge role in the transformation and improvement of the country's football landscape.
9. May their legacies continue to inspire hope to ordinary citizens.
10. Madam Speaker, the 2025/26 budget is tabled at a critical juncture as the 7th Administration embarks on its journey to rebuild and refocus government. As directed by President Ramaphosa in the State of the Nation Address and reinforced by Premier Mandla Ndlovu in the State of the Province Address, we are called to be a government that is ethical, capable, and developmental; one that delivers with urgency, empathy, and excellence.

11. CoGHSTA, as a newly merged department, is uniquely positioned to respond to this call. By integrating human settlements, municipal governance, and traditional affairs, we are creating a united institutional force that will accelerate service delivery and transform communities.
12. Worth noting, this merger is not a bureaucratic rearrangement but a people-centred transformation. Therefore, it must be felt by families who do not have roofs over their heads, by communities to access clean water, by traditional leaders who are capacitated to lead with dignity, and by municipalities that are better equipped to serve.
13. Honourable Speaker, I wish to inform the House that a new draft organisational structure has been developed and thoroughly consulted upon with all relevant stakeholders. This structure, which was endorsed by the Executive Council on 2 July 2025, aligns the budget and programme structure, promotes professionalisation, and significantly increases capacity.
14. It reflects the Department's renewed commitment to service delivery, particularly in supporting local government, traditional leadership, and infrastructure development.
15. The next step involves securing concurrence from the Department of Public Service and Administration, followed by the final approval from the Executive Authority, to begin operationalising the structure. Once implemented, it will position CoGHSTA as a central player in integrated human settlements and infrastructure development in Mpumalanga.
16. To the dedicated public servants who form the backbone of our department, let me reassure you: this transition is being safely and sensitively managed. No employee will suffer any adverse changes to their conditions of service. Instead, we are building one responsive, inclusive, and capable institution that is anchored in the values of Batho Pele Principles.

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND POLICY IMPERATIVES**

17. Madam Speaker, as we look to the future, it is also important that we reflect honestly on the performance of the Department in the 2024/25 financial year. The figures and the outcomes recorded during this period provide both lessons and a renewed sense of urgency.

### *Integrated Human Settlements Planning*

18. Madam Speaker, Members and guests, we can confirm that the move away from the silo effect of building human settlements without the requisite bulk infrastructure through the merger of two Departments into CoGHSTA has now materialised.

19. The nurturing of positive collaboration between Municipalities and other Sector Departments such as Department of Water and Sanitation; Department of Electricity and Energy, has led to sound coordination of planning, budgeting, and implementation through the Provincial Planning Forum.
20. The Department is now ensuring that investments are directed to Priority Development Areas as declared by the Minister for Human Settlements and in the process transforming land use planning within Traditional Authority Areas.
21. The Department is working closely with Municipalities and Traditional Councils while delivering Social-Economic Amenities, serviced sites, and provision of Bulk Infrastructure in support of integrated human settlements and formalisation initiatives.
22. For the purpose of the much-needed integration, a number of key catalytic projects, amongst others were subjected to the necessary township establishment processes and are already undergoing implementation.
23. These human settlements projects will over the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) (2024 – 2029) period have a huge impact in responding to the call for the much-needed Spatial Transformation Agenda.
24. The projects have a combined yield of 54 884 sites to ensure quick delivery of serviced sites, and ultimately top structures and social amenities, in the current financial year and over the MTDP period. To name but a few these projects are the following:
- i. Rondebosch comprising of 6481 stands in Steve Tshwete Local Municipality;
  - ii. Thubelihle Extensions 7, 8, 9 and 10 comprising of 7 296 stands in eMalahleni Municipality;
  - iii. Phola Iraq comprising of 4185 stands in Emalahleni Municipality;
  - iv. Ermelo Extension 44 comprising 5921 stands in Msukaligwa Municipality;
  - v. Secunda Extensions 76 and 75 comprising of 2631 stands in Goven Mbeki Municipality;
  - vi. Mbalenhle Extension 32 (commonly known as Branden Village) comprising of 6 196 stands in Govan Mbeki Municipality;
  - vii. Leslie Extension 8 comprising of 3365 stands in Goven Mbeki Municipality;
  - viii. Silobela Extension 5 comprising of 3 461 Chief Albert Luthuli Municipality;
  - ix. KaMhlushwa-A Extension 3 comprising of 5141 stands in Nkomazi Municipality; and
  - x. Komatipoort Extension 18 comprising of 1009 stands in Nkomazi Municipality.

25. Madam Speaker, these integrated human settlements and formalisation initiatives will form the basis of the Rapid Land Release for self-built and delivery of subsidised housing units for vulnerable groups across the Province.
26. Amongst other informal settlements being targeted in all three Districts, the Department will in the 2025/2026 launch the Informal Settlements Re-blocking Programme in terms of which the Province will be opening access roads to allow public and private transport access; pedestrian access; and provision of communal taps and toilets where necessary.
27. This programme will commence with the re-blocking in Dipaliseng Municipality attending to Thembu Khumalo; Thembalethu; Joe Slovo; Mandela; Ntsantsana; Ezibayeni; Zone 7; Siyathemba; and Phomolong.
28. In collaboration with the Private Sector and the concerned municipalities, the Department is in the current 2025/2026 financial year ensuring the delivery of new smart cities.
29. These smart cities will ensure delivery of technologically advanced and integrated urban settlements that use digital innovation, data-driven governance, and sustainable infrastructure to improve service delivery, enhance quality of life, promote economic growth, and reduce inequality—while addressing Province’s unique developmental challenges.
30. Amongst other smart cities initiative, Acorn City with 450 housing opportunities; and Hospital View with 4700 housing opportunities in Bushbuckridge municipal area are ready for implementation and to commence in the 2025/2026 financial year.
31. Madam Speaker, the already approved Nkosi City with 3471 housing opportunities in Mbombela, and the proposed SEZ Smart City with 14 821 housing opportunities in Nkomazi, Bushbuckridge, City of Mbombela, and Thembisile Hani respectively are also receiving attention in terms of the provision of the requisite bulk infrastructure and implementation immediately thereafter.
32. The Department is also putting measures in place to address settlements affected by dolomitic soil conditions in Thaba Chweu and eMalahleni Local Municipalities.

33. In this regard, an amount of R246 045 068,63 has been set aside so the Department can finalise the requisite statutory township establishment processes that ensures a legally compliant formalisation of existing informal settlements and the establishment of new integrated human settlements. This is in line with the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act in the province.

### *Engineering Services*

34. To lay the foundation for future housing, we serviced 5 583 sites, which are broken down as 2433 in eMalahleni, 1000 Nkomazi, 300 Chief Albert Luthuli, 1491 Govan Mbeki and 359 in Thaba Chweu Local Municipalities, thus exceeding our annual target of 4 599.

35. These sites provide the groundwork for long-term settlement growth and tenure security and are now available for distribution. As a department, we have also noted that our people are mostly in need of stands to build for themselves as compared to government building them houses.

36. In the 2025/26 period, the department will be delivering 4310 sites across the province, with the City of Mbombela (650), Thaba Chweu (243), Dipaleseng (242); Chief Albert Luthuli (600); Mkhondo (306); Steve Tshwete (225); eMalahleni (1234); Dr JS Moroka (200); Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme (205); and Govan Mbeki (405) Local Municipalities.

37. Due to the major development on the Mapulaneng Hospital in Bushbuckridge, the Department is in the process of finalizing the adjacent new Integrated Human Settlement Development of Hospital View.

38. The total yield earmarked for development is 3,215 mixed use sites. The department is currently busy with the designs for the required bulk link infrastructure that will ensure that all these sites are properly connected to the external services of water and sewer with the actual servicing of sites to follow after the completion of this phase.

39. After successfully completing the servicing of 4,000 sites in KaMhlushwa Extensions 2 and 3, the Department has now entered the next phase constructing the bulk infrastructure needed for the development.

40. Working closely with Nkomazi Local Municipality, we will be building the link water and sewer services to support these sites. In addition, a dedicated sewer package plant will be installed to meet the sanitation needs of the area. To ensure reliable water supply, the municipality will

also be refurbishing the water treatment plants, reinforcing our joint commitment to making these sites truly habitable

41. Under Chief Albert Luthuli Local Municipality the Department continues the servicing of sites at Silobela Extension 5 with great progress having been made. 300 sites were completed in the last financial year and a further 600 currently in progress scheduled to be completed in the 2025/26 Financial Year. The municipality is currently busy with the supporting bulk infrastructure.

42. As sites are completed, we are urging local municipalities to release them to approved beneficiaries without delay. This helps prevent land invasions and ensures that the people whom these sites were meant for can finally take ownership. This prompt response protects the progress we have made and upholds the purpose of the projects.

#### *Housing Delivery*

43. When the Freedom Charter boldly declared that - "**There shall be houses, security and comfort,**" it captured a dream that still drives us today. This dream entails affording every South African a place to live with dignity, stability, and a sense of belonging. This department carries the weight and the promise of that vision, and it is our task to ensure it translates into real change in the lives of our people.

44. In the last financial year, the Department delivered a total of 1 650 low-cost houses across the province. This represents progress and provides dignity to thousands of families. This diligent work has been delivered amid challenges posed by business forums and construction mafias disrupting work with the intention of imposing themselves on projects.

45. Some of the challenges are land-related and contractor capacity constraints, amongst others. However, we are improving on stakeholder engagement and contract management systems as a mitigation strategy on the shortcomings in the current financial year.

46. We made significant progress in the eradication of mud and inhabitable houses. A total of 266 units were delivered in remote and vulnerable communities of Bushbuckridge (25), Chief Albert Luthuli (17), and Mkhondo Local Municipalities (224). These are not just housing

projects; they are instruments of restoration, affirming the value of rural and marginalised communities.

47. The asbestos roofing programme also moved into implementation. A total of 213 houses with hazardous asbestos roofs were successfully eradicated during Phase 1 of the project, covering Nkomazi (36), Bushbuckridge (69), Chief Albert Luthuli (68), Dipaleseng (08) and Dr JS Moroka (32) Local Municipalities. This intervention is not only about infrastructure, but also about public health, environmental justice, and community safety.

48. Therefore, we intend to make tangible progress in meeting the housing needs of our people. We are on track to deliver 1, 793 low-cost housing units across all districts this financial year.

49. Along with the delivery of 4, 310 serviced sites to support future housing developments and rapid land release. These numbers represent more than just an infrastructure, but hope, family, and dignity for thousands of beneficiaries.

50. We are currently on the ground with our commitment to fast-track the completion of a total of 1174 identified incomplete houses which are at various milestones and prioritised for completion during the current financial year. Hon Members, of this amount, a substantial 453 units have been completed to date.

### *Rental and Property Management*

51. In support of affordable and inclusive housing, the Department delivered four First Home Finance Programme and 78 Community Residential Units (CRUs), with 48 in Sonheuwel in the City of Mbombela and 30 in Reabota, Steve Tshwete Local Municipalities.

52. We are working with municipalities, the Social Housing Regulatory Authority (SHRA), and property management agencies to ensure proper management of these units.

53. To foster cohesive communities, five social amenities were completed, which includes childcare centres and community halls in Ntunda (Nkomazi), KwaGuqa, (eMalahleni), two in Thembaletu (Thembisile Hani), and Grootvlei (Dipaleseng). These public facilities are vital in bridging the social infrastructure gap in new and existing settlements.



54. During the Taking Legislature to the People (TLP), the Hon Premier, Mr Mandla Ndlovu officially handed over both the community hall and child care centre at Botleng, Victor Khanye Local Municipality.
55. Furthermore, the Department registered 3002 title deeds: a step forward in securing property ownership for our people. A total of 1503 have been already handed over to municipalities to be issued to rightful beneficiaries and the remaining 1499 are yet to be delivered to beneficiaries.
56. This remains a significant milestone in empowering beneficiaries with legal certainty, asset value, and a sense of pride. The department will launch the Title Deeds Friday Campaign which is meant to expedite the title deed handover programme.
57. In harmonising rental relations, the Rental Housing Tribunal has planned to resolve 600 rental disputes.
58. With regard to land acquisition, the Department has recently procured land within the City of Mbombela for the implementation of Integrated Human Settlements programmes.
59. Furthermore, plans are currently underway to acquire additional land in other priority municipalities, including Dipaleseng Local Municipality, as well as in areas experiencing significant demand, such as Msukaligwa and eMalahleni Local Municipalities.

### *Development and Planning*

60. Honourable Speaker, access to clean and reliable water remains a fundamental pillar of dignity and development. In the 2024/25 financial year, we intensified our support to municipalities in addressing service delivery bottlenecks related to water and sanitation.
61. This was done in line with the commitments made in the Water and Sanitation Master Plan Indaba, the District Development Model (DDM), and the President's call during SONA 2025 to prioritise investment in water infrastructure.

62. While there seems to be a water scarcity in our province, the Auditor General's report argues the contrary; suggesting that the perceived water deficiencies are because of a myriad of issues ranging from leakages, illegal connections, ageing infrastructure, and asbestos pipes.
63. In this regard, directing the MIG funds to infrastructure improvements and heightened monitoring of leakages and illegal connection is the most reasonable mitigation strategy.
64. Previous assessments on Green Drop revealed that municipalities such as Msukaligwa, Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme, Lekwa, Dipaleseng and Chief Albert Luthuli were critical.
65. Together with the Department of Water and Sanitation, we supported the above municipalities to improve on the compliance level. The 2025 Green Drop Assessments underway will soon reveal the effectiveness of interventions implemented to improve the system.
66. Moreover, Blue Drop corrective action plans are currently being implemented by municipalities to improve performance levels, particularly critical municipalities such as Dipaleseng, Msukaligwa, Chief Albert Luthuli and Thaba Chweu.
67. On average, water losses in the province are at 40% and municipalities are being supported to implement their water conservation and management plans to address this issues and improve on no drop compliance levels
68. As a consequence of wastewater treatment works performing beyond design capacity, poor operations and maintenance has resulted in municipalities such as Govan Mbeki, Dipaleseng and Nkomazi amongst others receiving court judgements for polluting the water resource.
69. In mitigating the challenge of electricity outages affecting, there is a need for dedicated power lines supplying electricity to critical infrastructure such as the water treatment works and pump stations including back-up power supply.
70. These municipalities are supported to implement action plans aimed at improving their infrastructure to prevent sewer spillages.
71. Government investment on bulk infrastructure is showing progress on catalytic projects such as the Msukaligwa Regional Water Supply Scheme Cluster 2 to 3 being 100% complete,

Loskop Dam Regional Bulk Water Scheme in Thembisile Hani being at 79% in progress, Ekulindeni Bulk Water Scheme at 40%, Chief Albert Luthuli, Driekopies Bulk Water Supply Scheme at 62% and the proposed Mbombela Regional Dam is at feasibility and under the process of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

72. Honourable Speaker, on Water and Sanitation, we echo the President's call to secure reliable water supply to sustain communities and support economic growth. Premier Mandla Ndlovu's SOPA rightly emphasised the need for municipalities to prioritise water and sanitation in their IDPs.

73. In the 2025/26 financial year, a total of R2.5 billion has been set aside from various grants to prioritise water and sanitation interventions.

74. Importantly, our support also focused on municipalities where infrastructure is old and under severe strain. To this end, we have partnered with ESKOM and the Department of Electricity and Energy to resolve persistent electricity supply challenges that impact water pump stations and treatment works.

75. In addressing electricity infrastructure backlog, implemented interventions include the upgrading of Philip Greyling and Amsterdam sub-station in Mkhondo, the Msholozu Bulk Supply Phase 7 (Switching Station & 132kV 9.5km, bulk line) in the City of Mbombela, Siyanqoba Phase 6 (132kV, 15km line from Eskom Valcan to Siyanqoba Substation) in eMalahleni, and the construction of 11kV Switching station for Rooikoppen in Lekwa Local Municipalities.

76. While notable - these achievements - reinforce the need for us to move with greater speed, precision, and community engagement. As we advance into the 2025/26 financial year, we do so with a clear understanding of the gaps, and with renewed determination to do more, and do better.

77. We are pleased to confirm that all municipalities have adopted their 2025/2026 Integrated Development Plans.

78. The implementation of the Community Works Programme is one of the plans for job creation in the Department. In the 2024/2025 financial year, 25 111 job opportunities were created

and sustained across the 17 local municipalities. The Department will support municipalities to maintain the created job opportunities.

79. The Department continues supporting municipalities on the registration of spaza shops. To date, a total of over 11000 applications have been received by municipalities. The glaring fact is that our community members are not applying in numbers because a total of 5500 applications are received from foreign nationals.

80. I want to assure the House that no noncomplying application with the laws of the Republic shall be granted approval. So far, only 3851 spaza shops have been registered. The by-law enforcement drive is underway in municipalities through a multi-stakeholder approach to clamp down on noncomplying outlets.

#### *Disaster Management*

81. Honourable Speaker, I am pleased to report that our Provincial Flood Management Strategy has been approved by the Executive Council and is now being implemented. The strategy identifies flood-prone areas and guides our interventions. Across the province, we are reconstructing infrastructure damaged by floods, using the principle of building back better.

82. To strengthen fire prevention, the Department hosted a successful Veld and Forest Fire Indaba in November 2024, drawing over 250 delegates. Interventions resolved at the Indaba are now being implemented with support from Fire Protection Associations.

83. We are also implementing winter fire season contingency plans and our Livi Lemphakatsi App has been upgraded to provide early warning alerts directly to communities.

#### *Municipal Support*

84. Municipal Finance Achievement: During the 2023/2024 financial year, the Mpumalanga Province has two (2) Municipalities that received unqualified with no findings (clean) audit outcomes, eight (8) Municipalities received unqualified audit opinions with matters, ten (10) Municipalities received qualified audit opinions.

- 85.No Municipality received an adverse and a disclaimer opinion. Out of twenty (20) municipalities, two (2) recorded an improved audit outcome, namely Emakhazeni which improved from adverse for the past five years to qualified audit opinion in the 2023/24 financial year and eMalahleni Local Municipality improved from qualified audit opinion, for the past five years to an unqualified with findings audit opinion in the 2023/24 financial year.
- 86.All municipalities developed their audit action plan to address their audit findings and are being monitored by the Department on a quarterly basis.
- 87.The Department will support municipalities in implementing their audit action plan by providing hands on support where needed. The Department has appointed a panel of service providers which municipalities can use to assist in debt collection to strengthen the revenue streams of municipalities.
- 88.To address alleged maladministration, corruption, and poor governance, amongst others, the Department conducted investigations in terms of section 106(1(b) of the Municipal Systems Act of 2000 in the following municipalities:
- Mkhondo Local Municipality;
  - Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality;
  - Govan Mbeki Local Municipality;
  - Dipaleseng Local Municipality; and
  - Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme Local Municipality
- 89.Significant progress has been made in addressing the findings of the investigations reports in Govan Mbeki, Dr JS Moroka, Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme and Lekwa Local Municipalities; however; there are still challenges in Lekwa, Dipaleseng and Mkhondo.
- 90.To this end, a former Municipal Manager from the Dr JS Moroka Municipality was arrested for contravention of the Municipal Finance Management Act (PFMA) and given a two-year sentence.
- 91.The Department will continue to work with the municipalities and law enforcement agencies to ensure that the recommendations are fully implemented and that those found to have done wrong face the consequences.
- 92.The Department has recently instituted Section 106 in the Nkomazi Local Municipality.

93. To this end, a team of investigators has been dispatched to the municipality and given 90 days to conduct their investigation and the report will be tabled to Council for implementation.

94. The Department has since developed a plan to analyse the cash flow performance of municipalities to determine their financial viability and required support for revenue enhancement initiatives.

### *Municipal Capacity Building*

95. To ensure that officials with requisite and relevant skills are employed, a skills audit exercise will continue at the 14 outstanding municipalities.

96. During the 2024/25 financial year, the skills audit exercise was successfully conducted in three local municipalities, namely Victor Khanye, Thaba Chweu and Steve Tshwete. Its findings have been presented and an action plan has been developed to address them.

97. The Province has made significant progress in filling senior management positions in municipalities. We are glad to announce that out of 124 posts, 102 are filled and 22 are still vacant. In terms of gender representation 64 are filled by males and 38 are filled by females.

98. Municipalities are therefore implored to prioritise the filling of these post and are given an October 2025 deadline to do so.

99. Governance improvement is not optional but it is essential. We are rolling out training, mentoring and compliance support to all municipalities. The Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent (MISA) is also being deployed to key projects.

100. As we strengthen public participation, communities are encouraged to use the recently launched the citizen's engagement APP – Livi Lemphakatsi - to raise service delivery related issues for prompt response. The APP can be downloaded from Google Playstore for usage.

101. In our quest to bridge the gap between government and the public, Community Development Workers (CDWs) will continue to identify community needs, fostering collaboration and encourage community participation.

### *Traditional Affairs*

102. South African has a long history in relation to customs, tradition, culture and governance. Traditional leaders play a vital role in bridging the gap between the government and the people, particularly in rural areas, while also preserving cultural heritage and customary law.
103. In the realm of Traditional Affairs, the Department undertook the construction of five Traditional Council Offices; namely, Kwandwalaza, Ogenyaneni, Mahlapahlapha, Amashangana and Matsamo - which are nearing completion and set to be finalised by 31 August 2025. Renovations that have been completed include, Ndzundza Mabhoko, Kwalugedlane, King Makhosoke II, Nkambeni, Msogwaba, Mpakeni, Umjindi, and Mdluli Traditional Councils.
104. We continued to support traditional councils through operational and cultural grants, ensuring that ceremonies such as Ummemo and other heritage celebrations were properly resourced. In turn, these activities strengthened our cultural identity and social cohesion. Municipalities are encouraged to assist and support these traditional councils where possible.
105. In compliance with the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act, the Province has reconstituted the 53 of 60 Senior Traditional Councils, with only five outstanding due to vacant Senior Traditional Leader positions and two that were recently recognised (Esandleni and Sphezi Traditional Council).
106. The Department has appointed 278 headmen and headwomen of the 287 headman and headwomen
107. We shall finalise engagement with Provincial Treasury on the provision of medical aid for traditional leaders.
108. Furthermore, we shall engage on a capacity building exercise for traditional leaders.

109. My office is inundated with a number of traditional council disputes and requests on new recognition of traditional leaders will be attended to.

#### *House of Traditional Leaders*

110. Under the National House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders, Amakhosi have championed the Invest Rural Masterplan, launched in all provinces including Mpumalanga. Government and private sector funding for the plan remains a challenge, but engagements are ongoing.
111. We are proud that the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency has partnered with the Provincial House of Traditional and Khoi-San to implement Game Farming Projects within traditional councils, supported by a Memorandum of Understanding despite that our game reserves are dilapidated, riddled with illegal poaching and veld fires.
112. Amakhosi participating in the project have already identified land. The mining sector is also being approached to invest in these traditional council areas, bringing economic development and job creation.
113. These projects have been rolled out across all traditional councils. Their revival and expansion are essential, particularly with the opening of the Fresh Produce Market, which will provide a reliable outlet for produce.
114. In terms of infrastructure support of Traditional Councils, in the current financial year, the department will construct Traditional Council offices at eSandleni, Kgarudi and Lekgoetla, and renovate those at Ebutsini and Enikwakuyengwa.
115. Paving and fence will also be installed for Thabakgolo, Sethlare and Mashilane Traditional Councils and a perimeter wall at the royal residence of King Makhosoke II, Engwenyameni. These projects will create conducive spaces for traditional leaders to serve their communities.

#### *Cultural Activities & Ingoma*



116. In furthering support to cultural governance, the Department continues to fund operational and cultural grants for Traditional Councils. Celebrations such as Ummemo are not just heritage observances; they are nation-building platforms that reconnect us to our origins and build social cohesion rooted in ubuntu.
117. As we continue preserving our culture, the department applauds the functionality of the Provincial Initiation Co-ordinating Committee (PICC) and the work of the Ingoma Task Team. During the 2025 winter initiation season, which is now concluding, the PICC approved 405 initiation schools that admitted 10,508 initiates. Only two applications were not approved as they had not complied with the Act, and seven illegal initiation schools were shut-down.
118. Our collective preparations, which included awareness campaigns and training on the Customary Initiation Act, have ensured that we answer the President's call "Mabahambe Bephila, Babuye Bephila." We will strengthen our support to the PICC through the provision of tools of trade and materials to further professionalise the initiation process.
119. It is with a heavy heart that despite our collective efforts, two young promising lives were lost this winter season. We shall look into the circumstances relating to their passing to ensure we record none of such unfortunate occurrences in the future. One live lost is one too many. May the souls of the departed rest in peace.

### *Finance*

120. As the country continues to face fiscal challenges and shrinking government budgets, the merger occurred without any additional funding.
121. The existing baselines of the former departments were combined to determine the final appropriated budget, which reflects an overall decrease from **R2.375 billion** in the 2024/25 financial year to **R2.360 billion** in the 2025/26 financial year.
122. The 2025/26 budget is structured as follows across the respective programmes:
- PROGRAMME 1: ADMINISTRATION: **Three hundred and sixty-two million, eight hundred and sixty-four thousand rand (R 362 864 000)**
  - PROGRAMME 2: HUMAN SETTLEMENTS: **One billion, three hundred and four million, seven hundred and twenty-six thousand rand (R 1 304 726 000)**

- PROGRAMME 3: COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE: **Four hundred and eight million, nine hundred and twenty-nine thousand rand (R 408 929 000)**
- PROGRAMME 4: TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: **Two hundred and fifty-two million, nine hundred and seventy thousand rand (R 252 970 000)**
- PROGRAMME 5: HOUSE OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS: **Thirty million, six hundred and thirty-eight thousand rand (R 30 638 000)**

**TOTAL BUDGET FOR THE DEPARTMENT: Two billion, three hundred and sixty million, one hundred and twenty seven thousand rand (R 2 360 127 000)**

123. The above appropriated budget consists of the following grant allocations:

- Human Settlements Development Grant: **Nine hundred and forty-two million, nine hundred and seventy-eight thousand rand (R 942 978 000)**
- Informal Settlements Upgrading Partnership Grant: **One hundred and eighty-four million, five and ninety-three thousand rands (R 184 593 000)**
- Expanded Public Works Programme Grant (EPWP): **Three million, five hundred and four thousand rands (R 3 504 000)**

124. Furthermore, the appropriated equitable share budget includes the following earmarked funds:

- Disaster Relief Materials: **Forty Five million and five hundred thousand rand (R 45 500 000)**
- Appointment of 287 Traditional Councils' headmen/women: **Thirty-eight million rands (R 38 000 000)**
- Traditional Councils Office Equipment: **Two million eight hundred thousand rand. (R 2 800 000)**
- Parliamentary Village Bulk Infrastructure Project (rescheduled): **One million, eight hundred and fifty four thousand rand (R 1 854 000)**

125. Madam Speaker, May I therefore request this august house to approve the budget proposal of **Two billion, three hundred and sixty million , one hundred and twenty seven thousand rand (R 2 360 127 000)** for the Mpumalanga Department of Cooperative

Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (Vote 04), for the 2025/26 Financial Year.

### *Conclusion*

126. Let me acknowledge the then CoGHSTA political heads, Mr Craig Padayachee, Mr JL Mahlangu, Ms Norah Mahlangu, and Mr Mandla Msibi as my direct predecessor.
127. Also worth acknowledging is Ambassador Mr Siphosezwe Masango who is in attendance today.
128. Honourable Speaker, as I conclude, we are standing on the shoulders of giants who came before us, and we are duty-bound to honour the legacy of service and sacrifice. Together with our communities, traditional leaders, councillors, and public servants, we shall build a province where there is dignity in every dwelling, harmony in every village, and hope in every household.
129. I hereby extend my appreciation to the Portfolio Committee Chairperson, Hon Dan Nkosi, Acting Head of CoGHSTA, Mr Sam Ngubane, management, my office, the ANC, and my family.
130. I would like to end by reminding the house of the words of the ANC President General Oliver Tambo when he said, **“Comrades, you might think it is very difficult to wage a liberation struggle. Wait until you are in power. I might be dead by then. At that stage, you will realize that it is more difficult to keep power than to wage a liberation war. People will be expecting a lot of services from you. You will have to satisfy the various demands of the masses of our people”**.

I thank you