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AN ACTIVIST, PEOPLE-CENTRED LEGISLATURE

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Honourable Speaker Nontembeko Boyce

MESSAGE FROM THE HONOURABLE SPEAKER OF THE KZN LEGISLATURE

Welcome to the second edition of the year 2020, our 15th edition, in the year in which the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Legislature continues to implement its programmes in line with our vision of being a People-Centred, Activist Legislature.

This edition comes at a time when the country is facing the pandemic COVID-19, which necessitated the South African government to declare a National State of Disaster, as announced by President Cyril Ramaphosa in his address to the nation on 15 March 2020. To intensify the fight against the escalation of the COVID-19 outbreak in the country, the President announced a nationwide lockdown on 23 March 2020 effective from midnight on 26 March 2020 to midnight on 16 April 2020 as part of the Government's effort to curb the rapid spread of the coronavirus.

The KwaZulu-Natal Legislature has not been immune to this, however, we have remained committed to serving the people of KwaZulu-Natal predicated on the fulfilment of our constitutional mandate to conduct oversight on all priorities of government, ensure public participation by all our citizens and law-making, and we continue to believe that we can grow South Africa together.

It is in this publication that we share the oversight visits during the programme of Schools Functionality Monitoring and Health Facility Functionality across the Province. We also share information on the work of Legislature committees as they have worked all out to intensify their oversight engagements, particularly on COVID-19 matters and the overall work of the Legislature.

The KwaZulu-Natal Legislature successfully hosted the first ever Virtual Sitting in the country: the Workers' Parliament, marking it as the official launch of KZN's digital Legislature necessitated by the current COVID-19 pandemic and regulations to curb the further spread of the virus. More sittings were successfully held virtually following the extension of lockdown: the Budget Speech, Youth Parliament, Young Women Seminar. The move to go digital aims to ensure that the business of the Legislature continues unabated and that citizens' rights and views remain the centre of our focus as we continue our fight against the virus.

We bring the reader closer to issues affecting vulnerable workers and young people of the Province during lockdown and the impact of COVID-19. This was done through the convening of a sector-based Speaker's Social Responsibility Programme. Our focus aimed at reaching out as much as possible to the people located in this sector.

The Legislature has put various measures in place to ensure the implementation of regulations as well as Lockdown protocols, including its various guidelines within the Institution and the public at large. These measures are based on the constitutional role of the Legislature of law-making, oversight and public involvement. This requires the Legislature to communicate constantly with the public by sending a consistent message that seeks to limit the spread of the virus while maintaining its oversight responsibility over what the government is doing in the fight against the spread of COVID-19.

All hands are on deck in holding Government accountable and ensuring the delivery of services and addressing the needs of our people through oversight visits, with which we can ensure accountability and openness in the delivery of government projects and programmes meant to improve lives and respond to people's needs.

Members of the Legislature have been preoccupied with ensuring that the radical programme of socio-economic transformation our people so yearn for, especially during this difficult time, is being realised for all. As racialised and gendered patterns of poverty, unemployment and inequality become the concern of our Government, urgency in achieving redress and social justice is the injunction that remains at the top of our conscious mandate in executing our public duty.

We wish you everything of the best. Enjoy this informative edition for your development and reading pleasure.



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CONCLUDING THE YOUTH MONTH

PROGRAMME ON A HIGH NOTE



KwaZulu-Natal Legislature concluded its Youth Month programme successfully when Members of the Provincial Legislature visited all four local municipalities in the Harry Gwala District to distribute face masks, sanitary towels and hand sanitisers.

The outreach programme, organised under the Speaker's Social Responsibility Programme (SSR), was the last of a series of Youth Month programme that included the first ever Virtual Youth Parliament and a thought-provoking Youth Dialogue on Ukhozi FM.

Honourable Members were well received in the Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Ubuhlebezwe, Umzimkhulu and the Greater Kokstad municipalities where they visited taxi ranks, shopping malls and villages. Chief Whip Honourable Super Zuma, who led the team that distributed the items in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality, cautioned people to be very careful and observe the COVID-19 regulations, as outlined by the National Command Council.

These regulations include maintaining a social distance, regularly washing hands and always wearing a face mask



in public. Other teams that visited the Harry Gwala District to distribute essential items to fight the COVID-19 pandemic included the Speaker Hon. Nontembeko, Boyce who led the team in the Kokstad townships of Shayamoya and Bhongweni, Hon. Veliswa Caluza, who led the team in Franklin in Kokstad, Hon. Phumzile Mbhatha-Cele in Clydesdale Umzimkhulu, Hon. James Nxumalo in Gugwini Umzimkhulu, and Hon. Mbali Fraser in Donnybrook in Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma Municipality.

KZN LEGISLATURE TAKES THE LEAD IN DIGITISATION TO MEET 4IR CHALLENGES

The Legislature has introduced a mobile application (app) to digitise operations in line with the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan to transform the entire Institution into a paperless environment. All Members of the Legislature have been provided with new mobile devices such as tablets where the app has been installed to enable them to have easy access to Legislature information wherever they are at any time.

Important information available on the app includes the annual calendar of Legislature activities, a weekly schedule of committee meetings and sittings, documents for committee meetings and House sittings, strategic plans (SP) and annual performance plans (APPs) of the Legislature and provincial departments, policy speeches, budget speeches, the State of the Nation Address (SONA) and the State of the Province Address (SOPA), National Parliament and National Government

information, bills and acts, to mention but a few.

Training on the use of the app will be conducted throughout the Institution to enable Members and staff to be brought up to speed to ensure a completely digital environment, to keep up with the challenges posed by the Fourth Industrial Revolution and to use technology to work smarter and improve productivity and efficiency.

MPLs EMBARK ON HOSPITAL VISITS



Members of the Provincial Legislature were deployed throughout the Province in June to visit hospitals and other health institutions as part of the Institution's oversight exercise.

These visits largely focused on assessing the health facilities' response to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Members were deployed in all districts and they received various reports on challenges by healthcare workers.

One of the two teams deployed in eThekweni, which was led by Health Portfolio Committee Chairperson Honourable Nomakiki Majola, received a report of the shortage of doctors at some public hospitals.

Majola's team, which comprised Honourable Zwakele Mncwango and Honourable Thokozile Gumede, visited King Dinizulu and Addington hospitals on the first day of the visits.

Honourable Majola thanked hospital employees for their dedication, saying that they were the only hope the country and the Province had in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. She encouraged them to raise issues that were of interest to them, including the provision of personal protective equipment.

Acting King Dinizulu Hospital Chief Executive Dr Zanele Dlamini said that while the hospital had received more nurses to assist with COVID-19, there was a shortage of doctors.

Dlamini added that what was compounding the problem was the fact that the hospital did not have interns or community service doctors, and those doctors who were available were taking strain by attending to normal patients and also looking after COVID-19 patients.

In a report compiled by Addington Hospital for the oversight visit, it was revealed that COVID-19 has added more strain to the hospital's resources.

The hospital had initially drawn staff from wards to work in the COVID-19 isolation units and had recently allocated 12 nurses who are on six-month contract to staff isolation wards.

Reports received by Honourable Members will be compiled into a consolidated report, which will be handed over to the Speaker.

SPEAKER CALLS ON YOUNG PEOPLE TO HELP FIGHT COVID-19



KwaZulu-Natal Legislature Speaker Honourable Nontembeko Boyce has called on young people to partner with government in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Addressing the 2020 virtual Youth Parliament held on 15 June, Honourable Speaker Nontembeko Boyce called on the youth to play an active role in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Youth Parliament was attended by youth formations of political parties that are represented in the provincial Legislature. It was also addressed by the Premier of KwaZulu-Natal Honourable Sihle Zikalala and the MEC for Education Honourable Kwazi Mshengu.

"The theme talks of young people playing a pivotal role in the fight against COVID-19. You are our biggest resource and your creative minds and immense energy can be utilised to boost COVID-19 response measures and reimagine a South Africa that is sustainable, non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous," said Honourable Boyce.

She called on young people to help harness the digital revolution and innovation witnessed during this pandemic as a catalyst for post-COVID-19 economic revival. Young people throughout the Province were able to participate in the virtual sitting through the use of various social media platforms.

"Today, I want to remind all viewers that we would have not been where we are had it not been for the bravery and sacrifice of young, gallant fighters of 1976," said Honourable Boyce.

Youth Parliament is part of the Legislature's public

participation initiatives in which the Institution seeks to involve various sectors of the society in the governance of the Province.

Delegates to the Youth Parliament raised a number of issues, including the high rate of unemployment among the youth and concerns about rising levels of gender-based violence and femicide.

Youth Parliament took a number of resolutions, including the call for Government to:

- Scrap work experience on entry level posts and initiate a Bill that will ensure that at least 40% of public service posts are filled by the youth.
- Favour the youth in procurement processes put aside 50% of procurement spend to youth-owned businesses
- Reduce data prices and incentivise the youth with data as it is a necessity to all learners, tertiary students and the unemployed
- Establish Youth Directorate Offices in all municipalities and all government departments
- Re-open schools only if safety against COVID-19 is ensured for all involved

KZN LEGISLATURE COMMEMORATES THE HARRY GWALA CENTENARY



Photo courtesy of MS Roy, The Sowetan

KwaZulu-Natal Legislature has been commemorating the centenary of Harry Gwala with a number of activities, including a memorial lecture and publication of a journal, which was announced by the Speaker of the Legislature Honourable Nontembeko Boyce in her budget speech in June.

The Legislature held a special sitting on 23 July 2020 to commemorate the centenary of the first Chief Whip of the ANC after the first democratic elections in 1994, who was also part of the establishment of the first Standing Rules of the Legislature and procedural processes upon which the institution operates today. A plaque is being erected in the Legislature Chamber in honour of all the Members of the Legislature who served from 1994 as part of commemorating Harry Gwala's centenary. Mntom'dala, as Gwala was popularly known, passed away in 1995 after a lengthy battle with motor-neuron disease, which he contracted while serving time on Robben Island. "Honourable members – in posthumously celebrating the Lion of the Midlands' centenary birthday this year, but also because of the need to invoke the fighting spirit of this gallant revolutionary as we wage the war against the COVID-19 pandemic – we have taken a decision to dedicate this year's budget speech to the first Chief Whip of the ANC, the late ubab' uGwala," said KZN Legislature Speaker Honourable Nontembeko Boyce.

As part of celebrating the life of this gallant hero, the

Legislature has commissioned a journal that will serve as a historic consolidated record that will document all those men and women who selflessly served the interests of democracy and the principles of our cherished Constitution since the dawn of democracy. It will become part of our history and legacy for the youth and others to find local role models from within this House as we build a capable state.

"To further ensure a resounding celebration of the centenary year for the Lion of the Midlands, we are hard at work on plans for the Harry Gwala Memorial Lecture to be delivered on 31 July, which is his birthday. Honourable Members will be kept in the loop regarding logistical preparations," said Honourable Boyce.

Gwala was born in 1920 outside New Hanover and died in 1995 in Pietermaritzburg at the age of 75. He was a politician for the greater part of his life. By profession, he was a teacher who obtained his teaching qualification at Adams College, Amanzimtoti and who began teaching at Slangspruit in the Pietermaritzburg area.

Gwala was a member of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), South African Communist Party (SACP) and ANC. He joined the (SACP) in 1942 and the ANC Youth League in 1944, two years after joining the SACP. During this time, he organised workers in the chemical and building industries and established the Rubber and Cable Workers' Union in Pietermaritzburg, Howick. Many of the workers were migrant labourers. In 1950, he was one of the organisers of the uprising of the National Stay-away of workers that caused him to be subsequently listed under the Suppression of Communism Act in 1952 for which he was served a two-year banning order.

During his lifetime, he became employed at the Edendale Hospital in Pietermaritzburg but was dismissed for recruiting members of SACTU. When the ANC was banned in 1960, he became an underground activist. He was arrested in 1964 for sabotage as well as recruitment of Umkhonto we Sizwe members. He was arrested and sent to Robben Island for a period of eight years and was released in 1972, when he became restricted to Pietermaritzburg.

In 1977, he was rearrested and sentenced to life imprisonment at Robben Island where he became popular among the young prisoners for his Marxist-Lenist teachings. His wife Elda passed away while he was in prison, but he was not allowed to attend the funeral. In 1980, he lost the use of his arms, which led to his release in 1988.

He continued to inspire many people in the struggle for democracy, peace and justice. If Gwala was still alive, he would have turned 100 this year.



WORKERS' PARLIAMENT REACHES OUT TO VULNERABLE WORKERS

The annual Workers' Parliament moved beyond virtual debate during the COVID-19 crisis to rural workers who are the hardest hit by the impact of the pandemic. These workers received the most needed tangible support in the form of personal protective equipment (PPEs), hand sanitisers and masks.

It was the view of COSATU, NACTU and FEDUSA that the unity of the working class in the labour market during this difficult time can better be demonstrated by them lending a hand in the communities where life-saving protective equipment is running low, as there is an increased demand for these.

The Members of the Provincial Legislature and the leaders of the three trade unions handed out protective equipment to workers on their way to work in the Mandini industrial areas and Ixopo. These are the workers that face the most challenges as they live in poor communities and work in industries that are mostly volatile in the time of the pandemic.

"Our hearts go out to workers like these, and in our struggle for better working conditions and better wages, this includes the fight against COVID-19 for every worker," said COSATU's Provincial Secretary Edwin Mkhize.

This year's theme was: 'Economic Shocks of COVID-19, its Far-reaching Impact on the Labour Market: Workers Feeling the Pinch.'

Speaker of the Legislature Honourable Nontembeko Boyce commended the good course by the trade unions and reiterated her commitment to ensure that the resolutions taken by them in their 2020 parliament will "indeed be followed up in pursuit of the constitutional responsibility of the Legislature, namely, to involve members of our society (workers) in the legislative processes of the Legislature".

Honourable Boyce said that COVID-19 came as a health crisis that has gradually developed into an economic and labour market crisis.

"Job losses, retrenchments and the grave risk of the absence of social security caused by a devastating health and economic crisis – these combined make workers feel the pinch," said Honourable Boyce.

Workers' Parliament is an annual event, and traditionally over the years, has been a two-day programme that commences with commissions discussing various topics and culminates in the Premier's address. However, due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the programme shortened the sitting to be no longer than three hours long.



DIGITISATION OF THE KZN LEGISLATURE

Barely a year since the Speaker of the KwaZulu-Natal Legislature Nontembeko Boyce spoke of a paperless agenda for the Legislature, it has come to pass. During that time, Honourable Boyce indicated that it would be viable to employ efficiency tools in the context of the fourth industrial revolution to deal with slow economic growth and dwindling public resources.

Honourable Boyce revealed that KZN was now among the leading legislatures in the country in running paperless operations on virtual platforms, especially on holding its committee meetings and sittings on Microsoft Teams platform and streaming them live on YouTube channel to facilitate public access. "While digitisation is currently benefitting the core business of the Legislature, the administration wing is to swiftly follow suit. The Legislature, as a whole, is strategically set to be a smart institution and this is an objective we are committed to achieving sooner rather than later. Pressure is already on our corporate services to also adapt their business operations and processes onto digital platforms," Honourable Boyce said.

She added that they were not only becoming paperless, but were also saving money as they continue to seek to reach more people through digital platforms.

"This time next year, we should be celebrating other milestones on our digitisation journey. One of them is the rolling out of a Legislature app aimed at making it easy for Members, Legislature staff and our stakeholders to both access and share required Legislature

information at a press of a button," said Honourable Boyce.

She urged members of the House to avail themselves for training on basic computer literacy for advanced utilisation of smartphones, tablets and laptops.

"Our ICT and Human Resource Development programmes have a radical capacity- building programme to roll out during the 2020/2021 financial year," said Honourable Boyce.

She added that the target on digitisation was not only focused on the Legislature, but it seeks to demonstrate that even departments can look into the agenda in their quest to enhance government efficiencies.

"We are aware of frameworks developed by the Department of Public Service and Administration on issues such as Operations Management and Service Delivery Models. Such frameworks have an objective of enhancing service delivery and cutting costs," said Honourable Boyce.

KZN LEGISLATURE MPLS ASSESS REOPENING OF SCHOOLS



Members of the KwaZulu-Natal Legislature visited schools throughout the Province to assess their state of readiness after more than two months of closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The visits were part of the Legislature's oversight responsibility and took place for the first time since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Teams were much smaller than in the previous years for the purposes of observing the COVID-19 regulations, which include maintaining social distancing during meetings.

Honourable Members checked various issues, including schools' readiness and the provision of essentials such as personal protective equipment (PPEs), sanitisers and the new seating arrangements in the classrooms in line with the Department of Basic Education's directive issued before the reopening of the schools.



UNPACKING THE KZN BUDGET



KWAZULU-NATAL has seen another budget cut for the eighth consecutive year against its Provincial Equitable Share allocation in the 2020/2021 financial year.

This was revealed by Finance MEC Ravi Pillay as he tabled this year's provincial budget before the Legislature's Portfolio Committee on Finance.

"The total budget cut for KwaZulu-Natal, taking into consideration the budget cuts as a result of data updates to the formula, as well as fiscal consolidation, amount to R2 billion, R2.7 billion, and R3.3 billion over the medium-term expenditure framework (MTEF)," Honourable Pillay said.

Honourable Pillay said that the National Treasury had indicated that fiscal consolidation cuts are aimed at reducing spending levels across all three spheres of government as a result of lower projected national government revenues, and the need to stabilise growth in national debt while providing support to Eskom.

Chairperson of the Finance Portfolio Committee Honourable K.K. Nkosi said, "The briefing by Provincial Treasury is welcomed by all Members of the Committee. It offers us all the opportunity to unpack the budget and allows Members of the Legislature the opportunity to clarify any issues they might have directly with the KZN MEC of Finance and his senior officials."

The next step in the process before the budget is passed by a vote of the full sitting of the House in the KwaZulu-Natal Legislature is that each department and portfolio committee will appear before the Finance Committee.

The Chairperson of Committees Honourable Themba Mthembu (MPL) said, "This briefing by Provincial Treasury is attended by all Members of the Legislature in preparation for their meeting with KZN departments who will outline their budgets. These budgets will be studied by Members of portfolio committees who will in turn draw up a report. This Committee report is then tabled at a Sitting of the House by the Chairperson of each committee."

Leader of the Opposition in the Legislature Honourable V.F. Hlabisa said, "The IFP welcomes the briefing on the 2020/2021 budget. Our priorities should be on service delivery rather than the nice to have. It is important that the money we have for this financial year is spent on time and correctly for the benefit of our people!"

Honourable Pillay said that despite the budget cuts, the KZN Budget for 2020/2021 would be geared to protect Government's key priority programmes "so that we do not lose sight of our vision of ensuring a better life for all."

Honourable Pillay added, "The challenge we face today is different from that of Luthuli, OR Tambo and Mandela. We are not required to face bullets or go to jail. We are simply asked to be sober, determined, disciplined and focused and to work hard every day for as long as we are called upon to do so."

The youth of South Africa have always been at the forefront of any revolution, responsible for their victories, knowing they are struggling for their future and that of generations to come.

On 6 April 1979, possibly the bravest young man to live was hung. Solomon Mahlangu selflessly gave up his own life for our liberation. The bravery of this young man is remarkable. Even knowing he was to face his death, he sent a message that must echo every day in our ears: that he is not dead but nourishing the soil. This metaphor is taken from what he said: 'My blood will nourish the tree that will bear the fruits of freedom.'

As young people today, we are a far cry from the sacrifices of people like Solomon Mahlangu who dreamt of freedom for all, of a democratic State that would be capable for its people, specifically young people; that would be able to respond to its citizens' needs; that would see to it that all historic injustices were reversed or rectified; that would see its economic participation as a reflection of its population; where marginalisation of the black majority would be a thing of the past; where young people would strive in all their endeavours because resources, space and access allowed it.

As an ANC-led government, we remain resolute in our pursuit of a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa in which the people, as a whole, shall govern and all shall enjoy equal rights. The President, in his SONA, spoke elaborately about the plans he has in the sixth administration for young people to ensure a prosperous South Africa. In the words of the great O.R. Tambo: "A country, a movement, a people that does not value its youth, does not value its future."



I am honoured to be the Chairperson for the Sports and Recreation Committee, and I have had the opportunity to meet the most talented young sportspeople. Some of the most inspiring were those who excelled in sports from rural areas without facilities but who competed against people from better backgrounds and still defied the odds stacked against them. I've met talented young people who have represented the Province in different events and activities and have returned victorious. I've had an opportunity to see the amazing infrastructure for sports and recreation in areas that the former government had neglected.

I have had the honour of meeting our football teams who participated in the Premier, first and second divisions, the SAFA Regional League and local football teams. I have met different sporting codes, intending to ensure that our committee plays a meaningful role in ensuring that the environment is conducive for sports and recreation to continue to play a significant economic role in the local economy.

To achieve this, the Department assures, through committee accountability, that resources are focused on the building of sporting infrastructure with necessary basic amenities and will ensure continued support to sports federations and entities through funding to deliver sports development and high-performance programmes. Sports that are youth dominated are a means of income for many, a profession and an economic contributor.

We, as a country and a Province facing the global COVID-19 pandemic, have had to cancel competitions, events, and activities that affect many of young people in the sporting fraternity.

We are grateful for the interventions announced by the President. We thank those at the forefront of this mission: Minister Dr Zweli Mkhize, the National Command Team, MEC Nomagugu Simelane, and all involved in working tirelessly to curb the spread and flatten the curve.

The times might seem bleak but we will work together to get through it. The setbacks will be reversed where they can and new avenues and paths created where irreversible. In these trying times, we encourage our young professional healthworkers to be resilient, courageous and to use their skills to serve our people during this time of need.

We are a nation that has overcome atrocious crimes against humanity – a resilient nation. I urge us all to comply with all the regulations. This too we shall overcome.

Amanda Bani-Mapena

Chairperson Sports and Recreation Portfolio Committee

KZN LEGISLATURE MOURNS THE PASSING OF HONOURABLE N.R. MTHEMBU

KwaZulu-Natal Legislature was dealt a massive blow with the passing of Honourable Njabulo Ricardo Mthembu, who joined the Legislature after the 2019 national and provincial elections.



The late, Honourable Ricardo Mthembu

Shortly after being sworn in as a Member of the Provincial Legislature, Honourable Mthembu was elected Chair of the Portfolio Committee on Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA).

Paying tribute, the Speaker of the KwaZulu-Natal Legislature Honourable Nontembeko Boyce said that the Legislature was still expecting a lot from him, as he had only served in local government for eight years.

"I would like to express our great sadness on behalf of the Legislature. Our sincere and deepest condolences go out to his family, his party, the African National Congress, the KZN Legislature Family and the people of KwaZulu-Natal", said Honourable Boyce.

Honourable Mthembu served as the Mayor of the KwaDukuza Municipality for eight years but stepped down after the May elections.

"Honourable Mthembu understood the importance of the oversight responsibility of CoGTA Portfolio Committee as a legislator and carried out his responsibilities with dignity," said Honourable Boyce.

He also contributed greatly not only to ensuring that the department fulfilled its mandate, but to ensuring improved delivery of services to communities.

KwaZulu-Natal Legislature Chairperson of Committees Honourable Themba Mthembu echoed the sentiments of other legislators by saying that Ricardo was dedicated to his work and committed to the upliftment of poor and marginalised communities.

He will be dearly missed by all of us. May his soul rest in eternal peace.



Photo courtesy of Rising Sun Community Newspaper.



Honourable Linda Hlongwa-Madlala

HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE RECEIVES REPORT ON THE DEPARTMENT'S COVID-19 INTERVENTION

KwaZulu-Natal Legislature's Portfolio Committee on Human Settlements has commended the Department of Human Settlements for prioritising the poor and marginalised sectors of the society in its COVID-19 interventions, which included mass sanitisation of informal settlements, transit camps and hostels and supplying sanitisers and soap bars to households.

Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee Honourable Linda Hlongwa-Madlala thanked the Department and the MEC for prioritising the marginalised sectors of our society such as informal settlements and hostels.

The Department was led by MEC Neliswa Peggy Nkonyeni and the Head of Department Mr Mduduzi Zungu. Other stakeholders such as the South African National Civics Organisation and the 'shack-dwellers' movement Abahlali base Mjondolo, also attended the briefing.

Honourable Nkonyeni reported that the Department's COVID-19 interventions included public health awareness campaigns and the installation of

static water tanks to communities such as informal settlements. The Department also extended the informal settlement upgrading programme and anti-land invasion campaigns. She added that the Department has received requests to include old age homes in its sanitisation programme.

The Department's report was well received by members of the Portfolio Committee, with most of them commending the Department for its swift interventions.

"The Department also needs to plan beyond COVID-19 and present us with its plan on the reprioritised budget, at the face of the COVID-19," said Honourable Hlongwa-Madlala.

CoGTA PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE RECEIVES A REPORT ON INTERVENTIONS TO CONTAIN THE SPREAD OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



CoGTA MEC Siphon Hlomuka inspecting the water tanks purchased by his department to be distributed to different municipalities in order to bring water closer to the communities during in an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19.



Honourable Ricardo Mthembu

KwaZulu-Natal Legislature's Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) has been assured that a Provincial COVID-19 Response Plan is in place to guide the implementation of interventions by various departments, municipalities and stakeholders.

CoGTA MEC Siphon Hlomuka said that the plan is informed by risk assessments that identify hotspot areas and vulnerabilities at municipal level.

The committee was briefed on the current situation in KwaZulu-Natal regarding the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. EThekweni Metro is the epicentre of COVID-19 in the Province and has recorded the highest number of confirmed cases.

Honourable Hlomuka told the Committee that the department was also providing water in the form of static tanks and mobile water tanks to communities to improve hygiene, which is central to containing the spread of the pandemic.

"There is a sanitisation programme that is being rolled out in public amenities across the Province, which also targets informal settlements. The department is involved in the distribution of food parcels to vulnerable communities through municipalities," Honourable Hlomuka said.

Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee Honourable Ricardo Mthembu raised serious concerns about the distribution of food parcels to these communities. "We want to see better coordination in the distribution of food parcels to ensure that there is equitable and transparent distribution of food parcels to communities. There is a perception that municipalities are distributing food parcels along party lines," Honourable Mthembu said.

The department has reprioritised its current budget to accommodate its disaster management interventions

in order to combat the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The committee was also informed that the national government has not made funding available to the Province to combat the spread of COVID-19. CoGTA is finding it extremely difficult to get support from the national department of CoGTA. The department has submitted disaster management plans, but has not yet received a response.

None of the KZN municipalities have been granted relief funding to deal with the COVID-19 crisis. They are using their budgets to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, including the distribution of food parcels. The department has requested the committee's intervention.

Honourable Hlomuka said that he has engaged his national counterpart, Minister Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, to resolve the issue of funding to the Province. The MEC has been informed that National Treasury has not released funding to provinces for fighting the spread of the pandemic as it was still busy with calculations.

"As Chairperson of the CoGTA Portfolio Committee, I will engage the Premier and the Chairperson of CoGTA in the National Parliament to ensure that funding for combatting the COVID-19 pandemic is released by national government and made available to the Province as a matter of urgency. We also encourage our MEC to continue with his engagements with the national minister to fast-track the release of funding to fight the spread of the pandemic in KZN," said Honourable Mthembu.



Photos courtesy of KZNOnline.

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE WELCOMES THE DONATION OF CATTLE TO NEEDY FAMILIES

KwaZulu-Natal Legislature's Portfolio Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development welcomed the donation of a herd of cattle by the African Farmers Association (AFASA) (30) and the provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (40).

The donated cattle were slaughtered at CEDARA and parcels of meat distributed to needy families throughout the Province who were hardest hit by the COVID-19.

Portfolio Committee Chairperson Honourable Ntombikayise Sibhidla-Saphetha has commended AFASA for its gesture, saying that it was in the true spirit of Ubuntu.

"We call on other businesses to take the cue from AFASA and extend a helping hand to our needy

communities. Government cannot do it alone; private sector has a huge role to play. We encourage other business people to come forward and assist in the efforts of lessening the impact of the virus," said Sibhidla-Saphetha.

She added that the small-scale farmers, including those who are members of AFASA, were also hit very hard by the pandemic but it didn't stop them from extending a helping hand.

HEALTH PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE

HOLDS SERIES OF MEETINGS TO DISCUSS THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO DEAL WITH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



The Portfolio Committee on Health called for the Department of Health to make presentations on the readiness of health institutions to contain the spread of the coronavirus after Chairperson Honourable Nomakiki Majola expressed its dissatisfaction with the state of some of the health institutions that were visited across the Province.

These institutions included Greys, Addington, Ngwelezane and Manguzi hospitals. The Chairperson was not pleased with the state of readiness as there were several infrastructural adjustments that had to be put in place to ensure that the isolation rooms were equipped to admit patients.

"Addington had better facilities, although some adjustments were needed. Ngwelezane and Manguzi hospitals were also in a much better state," Honourable Majola said.

The MEC for Health Nomagugu Simelane-Zulu said that although Greys Hospital was one of the designated institutions by the National Department, the Provincial Department of Health decided to further designate a few others, "because of the vast province we have, we cannot only have one institution. These include four regional hospitals, namely, Madadeni, Newcastle, Ladysmith, and Edendale."

The discussion was extended to include the training

of staff, which the department confirmed to have taken place, and assured the Committee that issues of waste management in cases of death and general management of infected patients were properly addressed to eliminate human-to-human transmission.

There was also an assurance of ongoing contact between the department and the National Institute for Communicable Diseases in which revised case definitions were distributed regularly to all health facilities through their coordinators.

Simelane-Zulu said that additional hospitals had been identified for renovations to meet the requirements for future use and management of confirmed cases. These are Dundee, Vryheid, Emmaus and Murchison District hospitals.

Members of the Committee impressed on the Department the importance of running community media campaigns, including newspaper adverts.

FINANCE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE

INTERVENES IN A SANITATION PROGRAMME IN NONGOMA

After receiving reports through a whistleblower of a stalled sanitation programme in Msebe, kwaNongoma, the Chairperson of the Finance Portfolio Committee Honourable Sipho 'K.K.' Nkosi heard the community's and the Zululand District's views in a bid to restore the project.



According to Honourable Nkosi, this was not the only objective for conducting this focused intervention study, but to also 'kuphenya ibheshu (expose the dirty work)' of those who abused taxpayers' money, leaving the community with no toilets.

The Chairperson vowed, in front of a fully packed hall, that whoever was responsible for this wastage will face the full might of the law, and that investigations are to begin so that they can be held accountable.

Members of the community of Msebe expressed serious concerns regarding the conduct of officials

employed in the district and most speakers pointed to 'corrupt officials who receive brown envelopes'.

During an interview with members of the media, the Honourable Nkosi also said that according to the Treasury Department's Report, the supply chain section of the Municipality may have committed errors in the tender process, but he emphasised that the Committee will await the full report from the Municipality before jumping to any conclusions on how this project was rolled out and tendered for.

SPORT AND RECREATION COMMITTEE EXPRESSES ITS DEEPEST CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF CEDRIC 'SUGAR RAY' XULU

The sport and recreation sector in the Province suffered a tragic loss with the recent passing of soccer legend Cedric 'Sugar-Ray' Xulu.



Photos courtesy of eNCA.



The late 'Sugar Ray' Xulu (second from left).

Xulu made an indelible mark in the history of soccer and the development of the sport in KwaZulu-Natal during the 1960s and 70s.

Chairperson of the Sport and Recreation Portfolio Committee Honourable Amanda Bani-Mapena said, "We convey our heartfelt condolences to his family, AmaZulu FC, his Foundation and the football fraternity at large. We take this moment to thank his family for sharing Baba Sugar Ray with us and AmaZulu FC for ensuring that his legacy is cemented to live on."

The ANC-led government saw it fitting that the stadium, located in Clermont West of Durban where Xulu resided, be named after him before the 2010 World Cup games in South Africa.

Today, the Sugar Ray Xulu Stadium is used for Premier Soccer League (PSL) matches. Xulu was also part of the 2010 World Cup Legends Parade and continued to contribute to the development of football through the AmaZulu Community Trust.

"We will never forget Baba Sugar Ray, who made history in this country by being the first ever African footballer to score against a Whites-only team during the apartheid era. This marked a watershed moment for what would become the transformation of football in South Africa," Honourable Bani-Mapena said.

Xulu, a football genius on and off the field, played for AmaZulu Football Club for many years and will be most remembered for his exceptional talent in football and his leadership skills.

"As we pay tribute to his life and his contribution to the development of football in South Africa, I am reminded of the many occasions I had of sharing with him, how proudly he told his stories and the passion he had for football development. He brought the League Championship home with Zulu Royals in 1972," said Honourable Bani-Mapena.



VISION

An activist, people-centred legislature

MISSION

To deepen democracy and activism in KwaZulu-Natal through robust oversight, effective public participation and efficient law-making.

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HOSPITAL VISITS

