

## **Minister Mkhize met with Municipalities in Limpopo and Called for Improved Service Delivery**

10 JULY 2018

The Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Dr Zweli Mkhize, visited the Limpopo Province and met seven distressed municipalities in Polokwane today as part of the oversight visit to distressed and dysfunctional municipalities in the province. The Minister was today joined by Deputy Minister Andries Nel, CoGTA MEC Jerry Ndou, Finance MEC Rob Tooley, Mayors and Councilors.

Minister Mkhize emphasised that the visit was to strengthen the Back to Basics approach in municipalities. “We want clean municipalities and ensure that our communities are able to benefit”, said Minister Mkhize.

The following seven distressed municipalities in the province were the focus of the meeting:

Mopani DMThabazimbi LMMusina LMMogalakwena LMFetakgomo – Tubatse LMModimolle – Mookgopong LMVhembe DM

These municipalities have been experiencing problems related to service delivery, unstable management and poor governance as well as poor financial management over the past few years. A number of interventions by national and provincial have in some cases yielded positive results, whereas in some there were less than optimal.

Today’s meeting noted that some of these municipalities share the same challenges such as the failure to fill senior managers’ positions and unstable management arising from issues related to placement of employees within the institutions.

Minister Mkhize noted that there was a decline in revenue collection by these municipalities, which negatively affected their financial viability and ability to honour their financial obligations for bulk electricity and water.

He also urged municipalities to go back to basics and efficiently provide municipal services to be able to attract investment in their areas, which could improve revenue collection. He challenged them to rise to the occasion and establish viable local economic development strategies for economic growth, job creation and poverty eradication.

The meeting also noted that of major concern in these municipalities were: Poor audit outcome by the Auditor-General, which has highlighted severe strain and pressure that they are under which is often characterized by unrelenting regression. Some municipalities are in coalitions and thus experiencing governance challenges. Challenges that emanate from the municipal amalgamation process post the local government election in August 2016, as is the case with Modimolle and Mookgophong local municipalities. The amalgamation of staff has yet to be finalized and this has caused challenges and with no feedback mechanisms. In some municipalities like Thabazimbi Local Municipality, the interventions included a rapid assessment and

interventions in terms of sections 139 (1)(b) and 154 of the Constitution of The Republic of South Africa.

Minister Mkhize has also expressed his concern that municipalities were approving unrealistic budget without the funds to finance the projects.

“The budgets should be aligned to the strategy and this will make it possible to ensure better and improved service delivery that benefits communities. The challenges of the municipalities that invested in the VBS MUTUAL BANK made this situation worse as the funds might have been lost forever,” said Mkhize.

Municipalities committed to working together with all sectors and stakeholders to ensure better delivery of services. This commitment stems from the agreement that all municipalities should be able to perform their duties in terms of the legislation and the Constitution and not be classified as distressed or dysfunctional. The filling in of vacancies was emphasised in an effort to ensure that municipalities are able to perform as expected. The key posts are those of technical directors, chief financial officer and the Municipal Manager. From the presentation by the Province, there is progress in the filling of posts and the municipalities were urged to fastrack the process more to ensure that strategic activities are successfully implemented.

Tomorrow, 11 July the Minister and Deputy Minister will hold meetings in Thohoyandou and Malamulele.

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