

DID YOU KNOW?

To Improve the delivery of, and access to basic services and increase the capacity and efficiency of the economy, government will over the next three years invest R827 billion in the building of new and upgrading of existing infrastructure.



MY DISTRICT TODAY

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Outcome 1: Improved quality of basic education Deputy Minister donates biomass school desks

Nkuna Eunice: GCIS Limpopo

"The best present a child can ever have is education," said Deputy Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, Ms Rejoice Mabudafhasi. The Deputy Minister was speaking at the handing-over of 250 school desks to Maatla Primary School in Finale, one of the war room wards of Maruleng local municipality, Limpopo Province.

The Deputy Minister adopted Maatla Primary School during July 2012 in honour of former President Nelson Mandela. She also commissioned a needs assessment at the school which clearly indicated that among other needs, there was a dire need for school desks.

Maatla Primary School is one of many disadvantaged schools in the rural villages of Maruleng Local Municipality. The school has 397 learners who are taught in nine classes, some of which are in run down and in dire need of repair. Since the adoption of this school, the Deputy Minister has painted the school, installed water pump and JoJo tanks, donated cleaning materials and rubbish bins, planted indigenous and fruit trees and promised to deliver 250 desks.

Biomass from cleared invasive alien plants are used to manufacture the desks at the Department of Environmental Affairs' Working for Water Eco Furniture factory in KwaZulu-Natal. The initiative has shown the viability of utilising invasive alien biomass to create jobs by creating products relevant to Government's needs, and at the same time reducing the cost of clearing invasive plants. According to Mabudafhasi, the project will create even more jobs since 18 factories will be established throughout the country.

The principal of Maatla Primary School, Isaac Bopape said they were grateful and excited. "The school has many children from disadvantaged families; we are overwhelmed with

joy for being recognised and receiving desks – this will encourage learners to stay focused on education."

Maruleng municipality mayor, Cllr. Pule Mafologela sang joyful songs together with the Deputy Minister saying that they were happy that education was taken seriously even in poor villages. "These children are the future leaders; dedication, commitment and willingness is therefore needed from the circuit to ensure that they get good education."

On behalf of the school governing body, Mr Collins Sebatane appealed to the Deputy Minister for assistance to other school in the area as well. The Deputy Minister urged the learners to take good care of the desks and promised an educational tour to the Kruger National Park in the September school holidays should the learners obtain a 100% pass rate in the June exams.



Learners of Maatla Primary School during the handover of 250 school desks.



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Outcome 1: Improved quality of basic education

Education is a societal issue

Odas Ngobeni: GCIS Limpopo

The community of ward 27 in the Greater Tzaneen Municipality has launched a ward school governing forum, heeding the call from President Jacob Zuma for the education sector and society as a whole to take education more seriously than ever before.

Addressing delegates at the launch, the ward councillor Maripe Mangena said, "It can no longer be business as usual. We have a school in this ward which had 166 matric pupils last year and only 24% passed, so it cannot be right for us to fold our arms. We cannot continue to say education is a cornerstone of our society, but act differently."

He said the forum would enable them to collectively mobilise the community behind education. "Past experience has shown that we have not been able to address common problems facing our schools in the ward."

The forum, which includes representatives from the traditional authority, churches and businesspeople will support and strengthen the functioning of school governing bodies in the ward. "There will be no interference in the running of schools, but there is greater need for parents' involvement in the education of their children," Mangena said.

The newly-elected chairperson of the forum, Bayana Mabuza has called on all structures and parents to support the forum. "We are not embarking on a witch-hunting exercise, but our aim is to address issues of education and monitor the functioning of school governing bodies in our ward," he said.

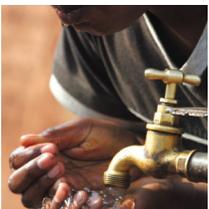
"We can't have a school governing body that is only called to the school when there is a cheque to be signed. SGBs must adopt a hands-on approach if we are to see an improvement in the state of education in our ward, Mabuza added.

The forum has pledged to work hard to mobilise funds for the best-performing learners to pursue their studies at universities and other institutions of higher learning.

Joyce Komana, the administrator at Bulamahlo Thusong Service Centre told the forum of the need to take full advantage of the resources available at the centre. "We have internet facilities provided for by UNISA and there is a continuous supply of government publications which can be of great benefit to this community," she said.



Members of the newly launched school governing forum at Bulamahlo in ward 27, Greater Tzaneen Municipality.



Outcome 3: All People in South Africa are and feel safe

Stern warning to drug lords and criminals

Vasanthi Naidoo: GCIS KZN

“Bopha izigebengu, Bopha!” (Arrest the Criminals!), was the rallying cry of Premier Dr Zweli Mkhize as he addressed a gathering in Inanda, north of Durban on 13 February. The KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Cabinet, under the banner of Operation Sukuma Sakhe – the Provincial War on Poverty Programme – visited various war rooms in Inanda and Phoenix. He made an emphatic plea to the community to mobilise and work together with the police, and other support structures in the fight against crime and substance abuse.

The Premier visited Chatsworth and Wentworth townships in the south of Durban to address the challenges of substance abuse and the role media and community have played which resulted in several arrests already made, particularly in Chatsworth. He emphasised that the strength to address social ills lies with all role players and that government alone cannot fight the battle.

Such outreaches are undertaken by the Provincial Cabinet together with members of the legislature, local leadership, senior government officials, NGOs and faith-based organisations, under the banner of Operation Sukuma Sakhe. These events take place on the third Wednesday of every month, called Cabinet Wednesday in the form of monitoring visits to selected war rooms in different wards and culminates in a community feedback meeting.

In his opening address, the eThekweni Municipality Mayor, Cllr James Nxumalo, stressed that the visit was conducted to strengthen public participation, and in the spirit of taking government to the people, as enshrined in the Freedom Charter. He assured the community that the municipality had heard their concerns about water and sanitation, housing, crime and political intolerance. He urged the community to ensure that Operation Sukuma Sakhe war rooms were functional so that issues could be addressed on a continuous basis, in-between visits by political principals.

The MEC for Transport and Community Safety and Liaison firmly committed to establishing voting district safety task teams to ensure that the community takes responsibility and plays a bigger role in the fight against crime. A rehabilitated drug addict, who now presents a talk show on the community radio station Vibe FM on Thursday evenings, delivered a moving and inspiring account of his encounter with addiction and the dire consequences it had for him.

Also in attendance were MECs for human settlements; agriculture and environmental affairs; arts and culture; sport and recreation; and finance; members of the provincial legislature; and the Provincial Commissioner, Lt Gen. Mmamonye Ngobeni.



A community member in the background reading the Government newspaper, *Vukuzenzele*.



An enthusiastic audience.



KwaZulu-Natal Premier, Dr Zweli Mkhize and MEC for Community Safety and Liaison, Mr Willie Mchunu.



Outcome 10: Environmental assets and natural resources that are well protected and continually enhanced

KwaZulu-Natal prioritises a clean environment

Jabulani Mkhonza: GCIS KZN

Keeping our biodiversity intact is vital for sustainable economic growth and development, as it ensures ongoing provision of ecosystem services. These services include the production of clean air, clean water through good catchment management, and prevention of erosion and carbon storage to counteract global warming. It is therefore vital that we conserve protected areas to limit further loss of natural habitat in threatened ecosystems.

initiated by the KwaZulu-Natal Premier to bring about a holistic approach to social issues and alleviating poverty,” Mbatha added.

Mr Bheki Ndlovu from the Department of Environmental Affairs spoke about our rights to clean and safe water and a healthy environment. He noted that people were mostly responsible for polluting their own environments.

To raise awareness of environmental issues, Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife in conjunction with Operation Sukuma Sakhe from Imbabazane Local Municipality, organised a clean-up campaign in Ntabamhlopheka on Wednesday 6 February. During the build-up to the event, the departments of social development, home affairs, and health, as well as the South African Social Security Agency, rendered services to the community in the Dutch community hall.

Wetlands are characterised by water, vegetation and soil. They often sustain rare species that can help to prevent certain diseases and should therefore be protected for biodiversity conservation purposes. Mrs Dlamini concluded the events of the day by explaining the causes of climate change and its consequences. She also condemned rhino poaching in the strongest possible terms.

The event started with fun walks, one from Mnguni Store in Dutch and the other one from Emtshezi High School. Learners from Sakhile Primary School, Emtshezi and Bhékathina high schools, Estcourt Senior High School and Good Home High School participated. They converged at Dangweni wetlands where they were briefed by Ezemvelo officials and received refuse bags and gloves to clean up waste material in the Dangweni wetlands area. Participating schools also received donations of garbage bins, seedlings and trees from Ezemvelo and the Department of Environmental Affairs.

Ms NNM Mbatha said since February was the month for nature conservation, it was an ideal opportunity to clean up the Dangweni wetlands. She said apart from raising awareness of the environment, they were also using the opportunity to talk about the importance of practicing safe sex. “Operation Sukuma Sakhe is a very good programme



Learners from Sakhile Primary School, Emtshezi High School, Bhékathina High School, Estcourt Senior High School and Good Home High School cleaning the environment.

