



MY DISTRICT TODAY



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OUTCOME 9: RESPONSIVE, ACCOUNTABLE, EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEM

Mpumalanga town, Piet Retief, formally changes to Emkhondo

By Bongani Mazibuko: GCIS, Mpumalanga

The name of the town, Piet Retief, in Mpumalanga, has recently been formally changed to Emkhondo. This followed a long journey undertaken by the Community of Mkhondo Municipality working with the Local Geographical Names Committee and the Provincial Geographical Names Committee.

At an event held at Mkhondo Municipality Town Hall, District Mayor Cllr Mischack Nhlathathi presented the historical incidents and activities that led to the naming of the town after the Voortrekker leader, Piet Retief. Over the years the original name of this area was phased out and Piet Retief was used. Since 1994, the residents of Mkhondo Municipality submitted their application to have the name of the town brought back to Emkhondo, as it was originally.

The speaker of Mkhondo Municipality, Cllr Philisiwe Langa, talked about the long transformation route, the procedures and processes followed over the years to have the name changed to its originality. She said, "The name was legally Gazetted in 2008. Now that is formally launched, we have a responsibility to popularise the name of the town as Emkhondo."

The MEC for the Department of Culture, Sports and Recreation, Sibongile Manana, addressed members of the community during the official launch of name of the town. In her address she encouraged all present to popularise the name of the town Emkhondo to all residents of Mpumalanga and beyond.

A delegation of councillors from Chief Albert Luthuli Municipality was also in attendance to witness this historic event, as they earlier launched the former Badplaas town back to its original name known as Manzana.



The local drama group portrayed historical incidents.



The Emkhondo Community in attendance.



The MEC unveiling the new information signage.



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OUTCOME 1: IMPROVED QUALITY OF BASIC EDUCATION

Seleri Primary School upholds the rights of children

By Kaone Moshwela: GCIS, Northern Cape

The Seleri Primary School, in Dithakong Village in conjunction with various stakeholders came together on 9 May 2014 to raise awareness on the rights of children building up to the Child Protection Week which will be from the 01 to 08 June 2014. The event also focused on encouraging parents to support their children and educators in providing quality education to learners.

The event was attended by community development workers, school governing bodies, pastors, the Department of Social Development, officials from the South African Police Service (SAPS) and a non-governmental organisation who delivered a motivational talk about child protection.

When she outlined the purpose of the event, the principal of school, Mrs Mompoti, said they planned the day to ensure that parents understood their roles and responsibilities in providing growth and quality education to their children. Most of the time educators have the added burden of children who are neglected by their parents. Educators experience problems with learners that could have been solved by parents at home. She reiterated that it was very difficult for an educator to teach a child who is abused or neglected. The Child Protection Week awareness campaign at the school is to urge parents to open lines of communication between educators, parents and learners to ensure that learners receive the quality of education they deserve.

The official from the SAPS highlighted that they experience problems of gangsterism among children, drunkenness of parents and Satanism that affect the education of children. She urged parents to take responsibility for their children and to respect their rights. She said the most difficult problem they experienced is that of Satanism because it is very difficult to solve. Children's education is compromised by parents who do not think about the future of their children. Parents often think that when

the children are in school they will get a complete growth path without parent participation. She mentioned the proverb that says "ngwana sejo oa tlhakanelwa," meaning a child need support of both parties to grow – teachers cannot do it alone. "Our country's future is in these children," she concluded.

Learners entertained the guests with music and dramas that related to children's rights.



Learners from Seleri Primary School demonstrating children's rights during a Child Protection Week promotion event.



This is what the community of Cofimvaba had to say about this progress:



David Makhosonke (Joe Slovo Ward 14):

“The clinic looks better than the one in town, which was little more than a shack. This is a proper building and there is always a doctor to take care of us. Indeed we are reaping the fruit of 20 years of freedom.”



Z Mofikeng (Nyanisweni Ward 10):

“Kuyasa clinic is looking much better than that cold shack we had in town and it has modern equipment for my sugar diabetes check-up.”

OUTCOME 2: A LONG AND HEALTHY LIFE FOR ALL SOUTH AFRICANS

Launch of the Kuyasa Clinic at Cofimvaba

By Vuyani Sibene: GCIS, Eastern Cape

Government continues to deliver on its infrastructure development programme by ensuring that the lives of communities in the rural areas are improving. On 14 April 2014, MEC Sicelo Gqobana officially opened the new Kuyasa Clinic. At a cost of R8,2 million to service 21 wards in the Intsika Yethu Local Municipality, the clinic was built close to the Cofimvaba hospital. The MEC stated: “One of the important things that was done by the Department of Health was making sure that all Health workers and the community it serves are well sheltered with proper infrastructure, this being done in partnership with many government parastatals and private companies assisting in funding for example Coca Cola, Coega and Africare.”

The Chairperson of the Kuyasa Clinic Committee Mr Njamela (Tata u China), had a good story to tell: “This clinic was built in 1986 and opened in 1987. It was called Gateway Clinic and was made out of wood and zinc. When the Department of Health turned the first sod to build proper infrastructure for the clinic it was declared that there was no site to build the clinic. The department had to sit down with the previous Mayor, Mr Plata and Municipal Manager, Mr Shasha and identified the site where it is built now.”

The community was thrilled with the new clinic and its strategic place next to the Cofimvaba Hospital.



Left: Intsika Yethu community. Right: Chief Matanzima and MEC Gqobana taken through the medicine room.



Left: The dignitaries at the session. Right: Unveiling of the plaque.



OUTCOME 1: IMPROVED QUALITY OF BASIC EDUCATION

A mobile Science laboratory for the Cofimvaba Senior Secondary School

By Vuyani Sibene: GCIS, Eastern Cape

In recognition of the great strides and accomplishments made in education transformation and the 20 Years of Freedom celebrations, the Department of Science and Technology handed over a mobile Science laboratory to the Cofimvaba Senior Secondary School in the Chris Hani District. Cofimvaba Senior Secondary School has had the best results in Accounting, Economics and Science and Technology.



Left: The Minister cutting the ribbon. Right: The Minister addressing the audience.

The Minister of Science and Technology, Derek Hanekom, said, “The reason for the mobile laboratory is to add value, to improve performance in teaching and learning Science. It was not easy to achieve what has been achieved in education in South Africa, therefore we must all embrace and treasure it then we will not just be a rainbow nation but a wonderful country.”



Left: Learners at the school. Right: Dignitaries at the session.



PHUMLA WILLIAMS – VOICE OF GOVERNMENT

LET’S NOW ALL WALK FORWARD TOGETHER

The sight of millions of South Africans standing in long queues to vote in the nation’s fifth national and provincial elections will live long in our memories. Wherever citizens voted throughout the country they would have noticed the enthusiastic and smiling faces of young people, many of whom cast their vote for the very first time.

The pronounced turnout of young voters bodes well for our democracy and flies in the face of those who predicted that the youth would not participate in the political process.

In years to come people may well look back at this election as the moment when young South Africans raised their voices and demanded to be heard. Government is proud of our young voters, who along with all others who voted have served to renew and rejuvenate our democracy.

Keamogetswe Seale, a first time voter and resident of Soshanguve said he was pleased that he had taken part in the elections. “I want to be part of those shaping this country,” he said.

Sihle Mkhize, 23, from KwaZulu-Natal said: “It is my first time to vote and I think it’s very important for everyone to exercise this right. I believe it is because of the voting process that we see development in our areas. What people need to do is to approach their elected government if they want any issues addressed.”

Their views were echoed by thousands of young people across the length and breadth of the nation. The refrain of; “If you don’t vote you have no right to complain and voting is my voice” reverberated across all forms of media.

The election was also notable for the tangible sense of excitement which prevailed on social networks. The hashtags #ElectionDay #VotingDay #GetInked2014

#VoteSA and #thumbsup were all the rage on Twitter and saw thousands of so called “selfies” posted of thumbs which had been inked.

Government is heartened by the large voter turnout. Statistics from the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) show that more people voted than ever before. This is indeed a show of confidence in our country and our democracy. Every person who voted took the future into their hands. We hope the millions of patriots who cast their vote will use the inspiration of the election to become more active citizens.

The time has come for us to harness the drive, resourcefulness and will to win of every South African. Together we can build a stronger and more equitable society where every citizen can prosper and share in the wealth of our country.

That our election took place with minimal incidents is a mark of how far we have come as a nation. The IEC responded swiftly and decisively to reports of misplaced ballots and other anomalies. We are convinced that these few incidents in no way undermined the overall success, efficiency and credibility of the elections.

The undoubted success of the elections is a reflection of the intense security planning and subsequent operations which proceeded largely unnoticed behind the scenes.

Government prioritised safety and security to ensure that every citizen would be able to vote and make their voice heard. The security of the elections was managed and coordinated through the National Joints Operational and Intelligence Structure (NATJOINTS). From their central hub in Pretoria this structure was able to predict and where necessary respond to issues and disturbances on the ground.

While travelling to cast their votes many South Africans may have noticed that offices of the Department of Home Affairs remained open. Over 3 000 of its officials were on duty on election day from 7am to 9pm. This insured that citizens could apply for Temporary Identification Certificates, collect their Smart ID cards and green bar-coded IDs to enable them to vote. About 69 mobile offices were also deployed in areas and communities.

We are convinced that the security and logistic arrangements put in place by government contributed greatly to the smooth running of the elections. However, elections are about choosing public officials who will best represent our interests. By all accounts the 2014 national and provincial elections were credible, and were conducted in an atmosphere of peace and tolerance. We congratulate the Independent Electoral Commission for a job well done.

We also thank the domestic and international observer missions for the monitoring of our electoral process. While visiting a voting station in Colbyn, Pretoria, the head of the African Union election observer mission and former president of Ghana, John Kufuor commended the “calmness and orderliness” of the voting process.

As the dust starts to settle and the 2014 elections pass into memory, we must begin to look forward as a nation. Now is the time to harness our collective energy so that we can build a better and prosperous society.

Life has changed for the better for millions of people since 1994; however there is still much work to be done. Our common struggle is to find sustainable ways to overcome the triple threat of poverty, inequality and unemployment. The National Development Plan is our future roadmap to achieve this goal and government calls on all South Africans to support this plan as we move into the third decade of freedom.



Ms Phumla Williams: Acting CEO, GCIS

South Africa
indeed has a good story to tell