



MY DISTRICT TODAY



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Minister Pandor drums up support SKA

The Minister of Science and Technology, Ms Naledi Pandor, has rallied South Africans behind the country's bid to host what will be the world's biggest radio telescope, the Square Kilometre Array (SKA).

"If South Africa is chosen to host the SKA, we hope the project's €2-billion price tag would spark a new sense of scientific achievement across the whole of Africa," the minister said on 29 March 2012.

Minister Pandor was speaking in De Aar as part of the Government Communication and Information System's countrywide public participation programme, which focuses on engaging the nation on developments emanating from President Jacob Zuma's State of the Nation Address (SoNA) in February.

During the SoNA, President Zuma billed the SKA as an infrastructure project with great potential for the country. South Africa has already committed at least R860 billion on infrastructure development by March 2014.

South Africa, backed by other African countries including Botswana, Ghana and Namibia, is competing with Australia to host the SKA. In total, nine African countries are scheduled to commit preliminary funds to get the project off the ground.

A decision on the winning bid is expected sometime in April.

Minister Pandor said the SKA will be 50 to 100 times more powerful than any current radio telescope,

and will be used to collect radio waves from space and explore the universe. Once fully constructed, the SKA will consist of about 3 000 dish-shaped antennae spread over an area of over 3 000 km.

The Minister who was confident of South Africa's chances of bagging the SKA, highlighted the many spin-offs for the Karoo town of Carnarvon, in the Northern Cape, where the SKA would be situated. The opportunity, she said, would place the town on the global map and would result in infrastructure development for the province, attracting billions into Africa.

"Over the past year, all important milestones related to MeerKAT have been achieved, many of them ahead of schedule," the Minister said.

"We are proud that the SKA project is well positioned to play a pathfinder role for a new generation of global science partnerships."

The MeerKAT is a world-class radio telescope designed to do ground-breaking science. Tenders for the construction of the MeerKAT have been submitted for construction to begin in December 2012. The MeerKAT will be one of the world's biggest and most powerful telescopes.

In March, Cabinet expressed confidence that Africa was ready to host the SKA in southern Africa and called on Africa's development partners and the global scientific community to support Africa's bid to host the SKA.

Government and representatives from the private sector who raised questions on infrastructure development, education and agriculture attended the information session in De Aar.

With regard to education, Minister Pandor reiterated plans to build a university in the Northern Cape, saying it would not only improve the quality of education in the province, but would also play a role in job creation.

President Zuma announced the building of the university during the SoNA.

Minister Pandor said a total of R300 million had been allocated for preparatory work towards the building of universities in the Northern Cape and Mpumalanga. The Northern Cape University would be built in Colesberg.



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Umdoni municipality celebrates a clean audit

For the first time ever, the Umdoni Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal has received a clean Audit Report for the July 2010 to June 2011 financial year. Not only is Umdoni the first municipality in the district, but it is also the fifth in the province and 13th in South Africa, to obtain such an achievement.

The Auditor-General of South Africa, Mr Terrence Nombembe, presented the Clean Audit Award at a ceremony held in the Scottburgh Town Hall, on 6 February. Mr Nombembe congratulated the Umdoni team. He said such an achievement is inspiring and the Umdoni team should keep up the good work.

In his welcoming address, the Umdoni Mayor, Councillor Siyabonga Khwela, said the Umdoni Municipality's fifth consecutive unqualified Audit Report is a milestone. "This key deliverable of good corporate governance is a national imperative to be achieved by 2014, hence Operation Clean Audit 2014. While this is indeed a very laudable achievement, it can only be of significance if it informs improved service delivery, which translates to a better quality of life for the people of Umdoni. Another Audit Opinion will demonstrate a lapse in good corporate governance and point to institutional challenges, which may cripple the environment if not dealt with and managed correctly.

"Our road to this outcome has been littered with many challenges. In 2005 we received a disclaimer, followed by a qualified opinion and thereafter unqualified opinions. Operation Clean Audit 2014 is not an event – it is a journey. To enjoy this journey we must travel the road that says: "Clean Audit." Now that we are on that road we must commit to maintain our direction on this road for any deviations will point to regression – the consequences of which could spell the end of the road for some of us. One way to ensure that we sustain this achievement is the continued focus on the:

- Streamline Strategic Planning
- Municipal Turn-Around Strategy (MTAS) for clean Audit Opinion
- MTAS outcome (efficient, effective and economical local government)
- Back to Basics (the Municipality's Local Strategy to overcome identified challenges in a pro-active approach)

- Enhance Inter-Governmental Relations and Sector Interaction."

He further stated that Clean Audit Outcome, a national imperative for all spheres of government, is not a negotiable indicator available to political and administrative government leadership. It has been decided and adopted by the leadership, upon which they have to deliver. He said the Umdoni Municipality is unambiguous in their adoption of this imperative. Operation Clean Audit 2014 is driven politically from the Office of the Mayor and administratively from the Office of the Municipal Manager.

The Mayor further said: "Umdoni's commitment to Operation Clean Audit 2014 was 2012. The fact that it came a year earlier is our good fortune in that our investment over the years has paid dividends earlier than expected. Operation Clean Audit 2014 is not about compliance at the expense of service delivery, as some would want us to believe. The Audit Outcome reflects on the performance of municipalities. Simple common sense and reasoning should lead us to believe that a municipality with acceptable standards of good corporate governance will be adequately disposed to meeting its service-delivery mandates. Human existence by its very nature is characterised by collective achievements. So this award is the result of galvanised action by many whom we are grateful to, namely, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs and the Provincial Treasury for their support and guidance, the Council Audit Committee for their oversight and guidance, the Office of the Auditor-General for its willingness to engage and assist without compromising their independence, and our staff for their dedication, loyalty and commitment."

The Mayor of Ugu District Municipality, Councillor Ntombifikile Gumede, was proud to be part of the celebration as the municipality did well while she was the mayor. She said this award is the best thing that has ever happened in the whole district and in the history of the Umdoni Municipality.

"We congratulate Umdoni Municipality for the success in obtaining this achievement, which is significant because it will boost development in Umdoni and to a certain extent our district because no in-

vestor can take this report as worthless," said Councillor Gumede. She thanked the office of the MEC of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs as well as the Auditor-General for putting pressure on all of them to comply.

"It is also worth highlighting the impact of audit findings in curbing corruption in governance. Compliance directives or instructions from the Office of the Auditor-General and for municipalities working tirelessly to comply are expected to be the day-to-day activities in our government if we are to root out corruption and its perpetrators," said Ms Gumede. "The remaining challenge for Umdoni is to sustain this achievement. They must remember that unity is strength and division and mistrust is a recipe for disaster," she added.



From Left to right: Umdoni Municipal Manager, Councillor DD Naidoo, the Auditor-General of South Africa, Mr Terrence Nombembe, Umdoni Mayor Councillor Siyabonga Khwela, Umdoni Deputy Mayor Councillor Oscar Zama, Umdoni Speaker, Councillor Sykes Naidoo, and Councillor Edwin Baptie



Mpumalanga youth inspired to grab development opportunities

By: Nthambeleni Gabara

On 29 March 2012, the Deputy Minister of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation, Mr Obed Bapela, urged the youth of Secunda to take full advantage of government's infrastructure development drive earmarked for their area.

"As we are planning to embark on a massive infrastructure development through the expansion of rail transport and connecting coalfields to power stations in this area, we urge young people to take advantage of this opportunity," Deputy Minister Bapela told BuaNews during his visit to Secunda, which falls under the Govan Mbeki Local Municipality.

"We don't want young people in this area, which is dominated by the petrochemical industry, to be spectators of the development."

Deputy Minister Bapela was in Secunda as part of the Government Communication and Information System's countrywide public participation programme, which focuses on engaging the nation on developments emanating from President Jacob Zuma's State of the Nation Address (SoNA).

The Deputy Minister also urged the young people who attended the public participation seminar to respect their infrastructure.

"As government, we are also saying you have to look after the infrastructure that is going to be built in your area. Even if you are angry, don't vandalise your infrastructure. The era of young people who speak as if this is not their South Africa is over," he said.

During the SoNA, President Zuma announced that government would expand rail transport in Mpumalanga, connecting coalfields to power stations. This will help in the shift from road to rail in the transportation of coal, which has caused roads in Mpumalanga to deteriorate.

Government has already set aside in excess of R860 billion on infrastructure development for the country by March 2014.

Deputy Minister Bapela said once the province gets its own university, infrastructure investment will play a more relevant role in the generation and retention of much needed skills.

Secunda is one of the five new water augmentation schemes announced by President Zuma during the SoNA.

Deputy Minister Bapela said the province would benefit from the Vaal River Eastern Subsystem in the Secunda and Komati Water Augmentation Scheme in Nkangala.

Acting Executive Mayor of the Govan Mbeki Local Municipality, Councillor Sakile Mahlangu, said: "As the municipality, we value this information session between residents and the leadership of our government. As an industrialised municipality, we are delighted that this massive infrastructure development on rail will play a significant role in terms of reducing more trucks on our already deteriorated roads."

With regard to the establishment of a university in the province, Councillor Mahlangu said the municipality would engage the relevant government structures to consider its building.

Sibusiso Maseko, a community development worker from Ward 32, applauded government for bringing the information session to his area by saying: "As young people, we value this gathering as it will give us an opportunity to air our views directly to our senior government leadership."

Nthabiseng Ramashoai, who said, "We want more of this information sharing, so that we can unlock the economic development of young people," echoed his sentiments.



The GCIS embarked on a series of over 30 post-SoNA information sessions to take government's messages and programmes directly to the citizens.

Besides imparting important information to residents with regard to service delivery, ministers also use these gatherings to forge strategic partnerships with residents and their stakeholders.

The programme also seeks to reinforce accountability to citizens through continuous public participation events throughout the year, as well as to promote participatory democracy through sustained dialogue between government and the people.