



**PARLIAMENT**  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

# PROVINCIAL WEEK

DAY 1 • Monday, 11 September



*“Building viable  
Municipal  
Infrastructure for  
effective delivery  
of services to  
communities.”*

## NCOP kick starts its flagship Provincial Week oversight programme

*The 2023 National Council of Provinces (NCOP) Provincial Week programme focuses on the state of municipal social infrastructure in South Africa under the theme: “Building viable Municipal Infrastructure for effective delivery of services to communities.” The programme which will carry until Friday, 15 September started in Gauteng and North West provinces yesterday.*

The NCOP’s permanent delegates returned to their respective provinces to assess infrastructure projects as part of the programme which will be carried out under the theme: “Building Viable Provincial and Municipal Infrastructure for Effective Delivery of Services to Communities.”

The week-long high-impact oversight programme aimed at assessing progress in the building of sustainable human settlements to improve the quality of life for the poor and building viable water and sanitation infrastructure for the effective delivery of services to the communities.

The programme grants the NCOP

delegations an opportunity to return to their respective provinces to assess progress made in the delivery of services to citizens and also provides them with an opportunity to contribute to addressing challenges facing the communities.

The delegates, together with their provincial legislature counterparts will spend the week conducting oversight visits to infrastructure projects including bulk water supply plants, roads upgrades, and water treatment plants.

Delegations will be asking key questions that will include the following questions:





*“Synergies need to be created between national infrastructure projects and local social infrastructure projects.”*

- Why are municipalities underspend on grants when service delivery is lagging behind?
- Are the grants spent in accordance with the grant framework and intended purpose?
- Do municipalities have sufficient controls in place when making payments using grant funding?
- Do municipalities allocate enough capital expenditure in their budgets to cover construction costs so that there are no projects delays?
- Are the municipalities and those tasked with oversight conduct proper oversight over projects to guard against poor quality and other issues such as abandoned projects?

It is hoped that the 2023 NCOP Provincial Week should start a national dialogue and points towards an oversight agenda with regard to municipal infrastructure and social infrastructure, and service delivery.

The points below contribute towards a parliamentary oversight agenda with regard to finding solutions for infrastructure and social infrastructure problems in South Africa. Key issues identified below emanate from the international literature and can contribute towards further discussions in terms of relevance and applicability. These recommendations include:

- The need to plan for the impact of climate change on construction and maintenance of infrastructure. Look at new or more relevant methodologies.
- Need for coherent, accessible, and reliable data about the volume and condition of social infrastructure. Need also for an overview of social infrastructure available to decision-makers, locally, provincially and nationally, about how different municipalities are doing in this regard.
- There is a need to consider the technical skills available at a municipal level. Perhaps a

municipal skills database should be developed that is shared so that municipalities may be able to draw upon a pool of skills should they require certain set of skills. This becomes particularly relevant for the maintenance of roads, water and bulk infrastructure. There needs to be an ongoing skilling at a municipal level so as to ensure that technical skills are available when needed.

- Need to adopt a strategy for social infrastructure across South African municipalities including a more integrated approach to different kinds of infrastructure development which requires a wider strategic approach to planning and funding.
- Investing more in social infrastructure, including maintenance to increase the employment impact of investment i.e., getting better value for money.
- Encourage participation of local communities and vulnerable groups in planning and implementation of social infrastructure projects and develop their skills.
- Encourage community ownership of projects.
- Link local infrastructure development to sectorial value chains and provincial infrastructure.
- Large-scale national infrastructure programmes need to be aligned and find connection with local social infrastructure project. Synergies need to be created between national infrastructure projects and local social infrastructure projects. 🌱

# The NCOP Provincial Week is not a witch-hunt mission, Chairperson Masondo



*The National Council of Provinces (NCOP) Chairperson Mr Amos Masondo told Gauteng provincial leadership that the Provincial Week oversight programme is one of Parliament's mechanisms to carry out its constitutional mandate of overseeing executive action at provincial and local spheres of government, and not a witch-hunt exercise, writes Xihlamariso Ngoveni.*

He said the NCOP needs to foster a dynamic relationship with provinces to ensure that their interests are aptly represented, and that oversight is conducted with a full understanding and appreciation of the issues and challenges on the ground. The Gauteng's permanent delegates

to the NCOP, led by Mr Masondo met with Premier Panyaza Lesufi and the Gauteng government's MECs on Monday to discuss the state of the provincial and municipal infrastructure as they formally began with the high-impact oversight visit to service delivery project sites across all provinces, known as the NCOP Provincial Week.

Premier Lesufi told permanent delegates to the NCOP that his executive is open to scrutiny and shared areas of concern for his government. He singled out high unemployment rates among the youth, vandalization of electricity infrastructure, illegal connections and cable theft as leading impediments to economic growth in Gauteng.

MEC for Human Settlement, Mr Lebogang Maile told the delegation that sprouting informal settlements, illegal land invasions, building hijack, and illegal mining are putting a strain on his department's efforts to further develop and maintain existing human settlement infrastructure. He implored the NCOP to consider amending the Housing Act to enable government to respond to some of the challenges relating to building hijack and illegal land invasions.

MEC for COGTA, Mr Mzi Khumalo said the dilapidating Gauteng infrastructure has no capacity to handle the high

demand that's exacerbated by increasing numbers of informal settlements, which are usually accompanied by illegal water and electricity connections. He said informal settlements are putting a strain on the government's infrastructure maintenance and expansion efforts, and creates unexpected backlogs.

MEC Khumalo also placed the blame at the door of municipalities which he said are struggling to safeguard their water infrastructure to prevent water loss, let alone reinvesting in the maintenance and expansion of these resources.

Gauteng accounts for the highest crime statistics in South Africa and although highly urbanised, it has the smallest land size and is home to more than 16 million people.

The Gauteng permanent delegates to the NCOP are led by Chairperson Masondo, and include Honourable Winnie Ngwenya, Honourable Mohammed Dangor, Honourable Dennis Ryder, Honourable Mbulelo Bara and Honourable Kenny Motsamai.

As part of their oversight programme, the delegates will visit various water treatment plants, the explosion site at the Lilian Ngoyi (formerly Bree) street, and other important sites in the cities of Tshwane, Johannesburg, and Emfuleni. 🇿🇦

# NCOP delegation concerned about poor management and devastating infrastructure development projects of the North West municipalities

*The North West's permanent delegates to the NCOP strongly voiced out their disappointment on the despicable findings with regards to a dismal failure of many municipalities to build socio-economic infrastructure development projects in the province. This emerged yesterday, in a debriefing meeting at Ngaka Modiri Molema Council Chamber on the state of provincial and municipal infrastructure during the first day of the week-long NCOP Provincial Week programme which started yesterday in the province, Manelisi Ntsodo reports.*



The Provincial Week is one of the NCOP's annual flagship programmes that provides permanent delegates to the NCOP an opportunity to return to their respective provinces to assess progress made in the delivery of services to citizens and also provides them with an opportunity to contribute to addressing challenges facing the communities. This year's Provincial Week programme is held under the

theme, "Building Viable Provincial and Municipal Infrastructure for Effective Delivery of Services to Communities."

In his opening remarks the Acting Premier of the province, Mr Nono Maloyi, informed the NCOP delegation that the infrastructure is aging and ailing infrastructure in the entire province and that it experiences financial challenges as the money

they have is insufficient but they are doing their utmost best to address the situation.

The Acting Premier further told the NCOP delegation that the province is encountering endless challenges such as incomplete and unfunded infrastructural projects with no consequence management; a dangerous challenge of construction mafias; the Zama Zamas (Illegal miners); high vacancy rate on critical positions; damaging veldfires, unending disputes amongst the traditional leaders and the challenge of poverty as a result of the fifty three point six percent (53.6%) unemployment rate in the province.

The NCOP delegation heard that tenders are awarded and monies have been paid for certain projects, but they have not been started. The delegation also heard that there are service

providers that have been blacklisted who are awarded projects to carry out, and the province has a backlog of criminal cases that are with the Special Investigative Unit and other law-enforcement agencies regarding unlawful tender processes and incomplete but fully paid-up projects.

The delegation also received a progress report of the N12 and N14 incomplete housing projects that were implemented by the province as the flagship and catalytic projects. The N12 project was aimed at addressing the housing needs for the community of Jakaranda in the City of Matlosana local municipality. The project was funded through the Human Settlements Development Grant by the National Department of Human settlements through the North West Department of Human Settlements. The project was a multi-year contract with the objective of addressing approximately 38 500 housing backlogs in Matlosana.

However, the NCOP delegation was told the N12 project for housing in the Jakaranda community stalled due to contractual problems. The department has since taken over the implementation of 1667 top structures from the Matlosana Local municipality and currently has four sub-contractors

on site working on the project. The N14 housing development infrastructure project in Touvleg was meant to deliver 360 housing units but is also stalled due to several reasons including the contractor having financial challenges and some of the sites being located on a wetland. The contractor, however, is back on track and continuing with the project.

The delegation expressed its concern over the problem of the incompleteness of projects within the required timelines and it wanted clarity on when the final handover of the N14 will take place. The delegation also highlighted its unhappiness about non-blacklisting and consequence management by the department over contractors who do not honour their contractual obligations and deserting projects before completion including the slow progress of law enforcement agencies in initiating criminal prosecution in instances where corrupt activities within the projects was discovered and reported. The delegation advised the North West Department of Human Settlements to ensure that it has plans in place to ensure that the appointed contractors complete the projects within the timelines contained in the tender and to ensure vetting system of contractors



is improved to appoint qualified and competent contractors.

“The Department of Human Settlements must provide a report with an updated timeline of when the N14 and N12 projects will be completed and hand over the houses to the affected communities...[and] this report should be sent to us by the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023... and the N12 and N14 projects must be concluded by the end of January 2024.” said Mr Eric Landsman, the NCOP delegation leader in the North West province. The delegation members also recommended the Acting Premier to initiate partnerships with the private sector to address some of the challenges and the provincial executive to ensure all the lost funds due to negligence and/or fraud during the infrastructure development projects are recovered and follow-up on prosecutions with law enforcement agencies be conducted.

Furthermore, the provincial executive must devise a strategy on fostering community engagements to reduce incidences of protests at construction sites and ensure all the construction projects create job opportunities within the communities where these projects are taking place. 🇷🇷

