

Budget to serve the people

Province has been hit by service delivery protests and the MEC is determined to turn services situation around

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THE provincial government says it has made great developments to table a budget meant to implement and respond to service delivery programmes in the interest of its citizens by prioritising education, corruption, rural development and crime, including basic services, in the 2013-14 budget allocation.

The priorities were highlighted by finance MEC Madala Masuku when he announced the 2013-14 provincial budget amounting to R33.7bn at the provincial legislature in Nelspruit yesterday.

The province has been hit by several service delivery protests in various areas since last year.

The latest violent unrests were seen in Mayflower last week when municipal property and vehicles were set alight and at Matsulu near Nelspruit on Monday when the dissatisfied residents called upon Premier

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David Mabuza to fire their ward councillor.

Masuku delivered his first budget speech after his appointment in the finance department last month, taking over the reins from Pinkie Phosa who was shifted to head the economic development, environment and tourism department.

Before the recent cabinet reshuffle by Mabuza, Masuku was political head of cooperative governance and

traditional affairs.

“The budget spending plan we are presenting recognises the urgency of implementing the service delivery programmes in the interest of the people of the province. We have made great strides in responding to the mandate of our people which is anchored in the five priorities

“About R122m of this budget is meant to ensure that all people have access to water through increasing storage capacity, expanding bulk supply, expanding and increasing capacity of water sources in eight municipalities as well as improving access roads and connecting communities through bridges,” Masuku said.

He said the provincial government’s budgets and expenditure must respond to the socio-economic challenges of province.

“We believe that budget is, after all, a tool for growth and development. We must therefore use provincial government expenditure to contribute to



PEOPLE PLEASER: Finance MEC Madala Masuku.

the reduction of the relatively high inequality, poverty and unemployment of our province.

“We acknowledge that in dealing with this triple challenge afflicting

society, partnership with the private sector is critical,” Masuku said.

The premier’s office and other departments received their allocated budget for administrative purposes and other costs.

Masuku said an amount of R200.4m had been allocated to the premier’s office for the establishment of a dedicated unit to coordinate and foster youth development and rapid implementation unit as part of the effort to speed up delivery in the province. The provincial legislature walked away with R243.4m.

The money has been divide like this: finance, R266.8m, cooperative governance, R425.9m, agriculture, R1.05bn, economic development, R821.5m, education R14.8bn, public works R3.9bn, safety and security, R841.7m, health, R8.084bn, sport and culture R351.8m, social development, R1.1bn, and human settlements, R1.3bn.

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