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INFRASTRUCTURE

# KZN government prioritises 730 road repairs after floods

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THE KwaZulu-Natal government said it has prioritised at least 730 road infrastructure repair projects based on the proximity to schools, clinics and hospitals, after they were damaged by the floods.

This was according to Premier Nomusa Dube-Ncube, who gave an update on the progress made on the interventions to assist communities and families affected by the flood disasters of April and May 2022, which left more than 400 people dead.

Dube-Ncube said road infrastructure damages following the floods amounted to R5.7 billion, translating to 1 372 flood-damaged projects.

Damages include pipe culvert damages, washaways and damages to bridge structures.

Dube-Ncube said the short-term interventions included the use of internal teams to attend to road closures, tree clearance and blading.

She said Vukayibambe Routine Road Maintenance teams were also used to clear debris on roads. Operation Siyazenzela is also being used to rehabilitate flood-damaged gravel roads in towns and villages. However, due to the extent of the damage to the road network, some projects were outsourced to fast-track implementation and service delivery.

"An amount totalling R2.9bn was



THE N2 in uMhlali collapsed in the floods.

made available to attend to flood damage in all affected districts within the province. At least 730 projects were prioritised based on the proximity to schools, clinics and hospitals. Several of these outsourced projects have been handed over," Dube-Ncube said.

She said to date, more than 80% of the roads allocated for rehabilitation by Operation Siyazenzela have been completed. The departmental yellow plant is still at work at various locations within the province to restore and improve roads effectively.

She also said the Department of Transport in partnership with the South African National Roads Agency SOC Ltd (Sanral) managed to open strategic routes such as the R102 and M4 using temporary measures. The agreement between the two entities includes the development of a permanent solution which is under way.

Moreover, through an existing Memorandum of Agreement between

the KZN Department of Transport and the National Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, the Welisizwe Rural Bridges programme (Bailey bridges programme) will be implemented in 23 locations in the province to provide access in the current financial year.

Earlier, Sanral said that phase 1 repairs to restore mobility on the N2 eManzimtoti northbound carriageway would begin the first week this month.

Sanral eastern region project manager Andrew Ssekayita said the damage on the N2 eManzimtoti occurred on April 3, and while Sanral was conducting in-depth investigations and preparing for the necessary designs and repairs, KZN experienced floods from April 11 to 13, which resulted in failures throughout the network.

"This necessitated that we reassess our priorities and concentrate on areas with complete road closures due to the floods, and give areas where mobility was still possible second priority, such as this failure," Ssekayita said.

He said the location, along with seven others along the Sanral network which require extensive repairs, have had their remedial designs completed.

"Unfortunately, we experienced challenges in the process of procuring contractors, which has delayed the commencement of the repairs in this location," Ssekayita said.

Sanral apologised for the inconvenience caused to motorists.