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WITH four people confirmed dead and one person still missing in the flooded Namakwa District, the Northern Cape Department of Co-Operative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (Coghsta) has indicated that urgent interventions in the form of repairs to damaged roads and damaged houses and the supply of humanitarian relief have already commenced.

Community members in areas such as Kommagas, Vioolsdrift, Rooiwal, Kleinzee and Buffelsrivier were affected by damaged roads that made it impossible for residents to move out of their respective towns.

The Richtersveld area and the towns of Lekkersing, Sanddrift, Koeboes and Eksteenfontein, Soebatsfontein and Nourivier also suffered severe flooding.

Coghsta MEC Bentley Vass said flooding has left many people stranded and unable to access health facilities and retailers for food supply.

Vass said a Disaster Management Committee consisting of various provincial government departments and the local as well as district municipalities, in part-

nership with law enforcement agencies, has activated urgent intervention measures to assist the affected communities.

"In terms of the Disaster Management Act, a local state of flood disaster was declared in the Namakwa District on Monday, July 3. Humanitarian relief in the form of food parcels and blankets has started.

"The Department of Social Development, the Gift of the Givers and the Red Cross continue to work jointly on this effort. This past weekend teams have been activated as first responders to disaster areas and procured 200 food parcels for Buffelsrivier, a community of around 350 households. Other necessities such as baby clothing, milk formula, cereal, diapers and water were also dispatched to the area.

"The National Department for Social Development has also committed to activate donor relief and request aerial support from the SANDF to reach communities faster. We are confident that during the next few days, we will reach all affected communities and people.

"We trust that by Monday all towns in the Richtersveld, Kamieskroon, Rooiwal and Vioolsdrift would have received humanitarian aid. In addition to this, soup

kitchens in these communities will also be activated to provide food relief and assist with the distribution of food."

Vass added that health-care practitioners are also on standby for any emergencies and to provide health-care services to communities.

"All primary health-care facilities continue to run optimally in all affected areas and all facilities have enough medication in stock as well as the necessary required health technology to effectively provide quality health services to communities. We have about 30 health-care emergency personnel on standby to attend to any emergency that might occur after hours."

Vass said that they are working hard to repair roads and bridges.

"So far 15 roads, including those in the Hantam and Karoo Hoogland areas, have been affected. About five bridges were also damaged by the floods.

"The MEC for Public Works, Fufe Makatong, held an urgent meeting with the national Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Sihle Zikalala, to seek assistance with the Welisizwe bridges. These bridges provide people with urgent and safe access to nearby clinics and schools," Vass added.