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EPWP TRAINING

Cogta MEC tightens oversight on EPWP training

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THE KwaZulu-Natal MEC for the Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta), Rev Thulasizwe Buthelezi said more stringent measures would be implemented to monitor the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP).

He was speaking in Mayville, Durban, yesterday, during an engagement with all the province's mayors on service delivery and governance issues.

He said that while 5% of the allocation of funds towards the EPWP was for training, it was not adequately carried out in some municipalities. He said Cogta would make unannounced visits at the various municipalities to monitor whether the programmes were being run in line with the requirements.

"Wherever we find that the municipalities are not dedicating 5% for training, we will write to the Minister of Public Works to stop the entire allocation of the EPWP to that municipality," said Buthelezi.

He added that they seek to incorporate the Executive Committee of the KZN Provincial House of Traditional and Khoi-san leaders into all MuniMec meetings.

MuniMec is a forum chaired by the MEC and attended by Members of the Mayoral Committee (MMCs).

"We believe this is an important step towards making MuniMec a platform where all leaders can engage and find a platform to improve the lives of our communities, especially in those areas governed by Amakhosi," he said.



KWAZULU-NATAL MEC for Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Rev Thulasizwe Buthelezi. | TUMI PAKKIES Independent Newspapers

Referring to debt owed to municipalities, Buthelezi cited that the amount exceeded R3.5 billion.

"The Minister of Cogta nationally, has written to all departments that owe municipalities and if that debt is not paid by December, the national treasury will deduct all those amounts and pay directly to the municipalities," Buthelezi said.

He also addressed issues of internal audits in municipalities.

"In KwaZulu-Natal, you have 12 municipalities that are spending R43 million per annum on external service providers to provide the internal audit function and that is something we want

to do away with and capacitate our own employees to do the internal audit function.

"The auditor general has also raised the issue that the council is not implementing the recommendations of the internal audit. Council is not implementing the recommendation of the audit committee," said Buthelezi.

He said there needed to be a special council meeting at least once a year and the audit committee would brief all councillors on the financial performance and all the issues related to performance, that have been picked up by the audit committee.

Buthelezi said that the disasters faced

by the province resulted in a strain on the resources of the municipalities, including floods, veld fires and snow-storm.

He said Cogta has identified 10 municipalities that will be provided with fire engine trucks (fully equipped fire response engines). He said fires were affecting local municipalities and the response time in getting the disaster response vehicles was taking quite a while.

He said that he would be issuing a circular to all municipalities in the province in terms of Sections 81 and 89 of the Municipal Structures Act, citing that Amakhosi (Traditional leadership) would participate in the Executive Committee of the municipality.

"The Act provides that Amakhosi sit on council and the Act provides that Amakhosi participate in the portfolio committees. The committee where decisions are made and where discussions are held, which impact the areas under Amakhosi and where oversight is exercised, is the Executive Committee.

"Therefore, the Circular today will say, beginning from the time where I have specified, there should be at least one Inkosi who will sit on the Executive Committee in an Ex officio status to ensure that the voice of Amakhosi is carried through in the decision-making process of municipalities," he said.

KZN Chairperson of the South African Local Government Association (Salga) Xolani Dube advised that the MEC revisit the resolution and enshrine it into the rule of law, to avoid changes under new leadership, and to recognise