

Eastern Cape State of the Province Address expected to focus on improved leadership performance and governance.

24 February 2020

On Tuesday, 25 February 2020, the Eastern Cape Premier, Lubabalo Oscar Mabuyane, will table the State of the Province Address (SOPA). The SOPA will highlight the provincial government's service delivery milestones in sectors such as education, health, policing, rural development and land reform.

The Premier should outline provincial plans to address fundamental socio-economic challenges including unemployment, poverty, and slow economic growth. There has been inadequate attention placed on governance and administrative issues that have plagued municipalities like Makhanda, leading to citizens and civic actors appealing to the courts for relief. Speaking on the state of governance in the Eastern Cape Province on the 1st December¹, the Premier outlined that not only had fourteen municipalities adopted budgets that were without available funds to support them for the 2019/2020 financial year, but that several municipalities failed to spend their capital grants intended for the provision of basic services like water and electricity. Unused funds are often reallocated to other provinces, further compromising service delivery in underspending municipalities. The Premier outlined that more decisive action would be taken against municipalities that were not performing, more so, if the performance was part of their power and authority.

With the recent judgement of *Unemployed Peoples Movement v Premier, Province of the Eastern Cape and Others*² the same sentiment of weak governance leading to the municipality's material breach of obligations to provide basic services to residents was expressed by the applicants in relation to Makana Municipality. This judgement outlines the importance of strengthening governance and oversight at the municipal level to improve service delivery. With the new district development plan being piloted in the Eastern Cape, the outcomes of these pilots may give the province better insight on collective action and how that can contribute to service delivery.

The SOPA should echo the State of the Nation Address (SONA) on the need to enhance economic growth and create jobs. The Eastern Cape has the highest recorded unemployment rate in the country at 36.5% in the last quarter of 2019 according to [Statistics South Africa](#). The Eastern Cape Province has been leading in [unemployment](#) for the past decade.³ It is expected that the SOPA will provide a clear plan on how to address unemployment and

¹ Herald Reporter EC Municipalities not performing –Oscar Mabuyane Herald Live (Assessed on 24 February at <https://www.heraldlive.co.za/news/2019-12-03-ec-municipalities-not-performing-oscar-mabuyane/>)

² [2020] ZAECGHC 1

³Eye Witness News. Online <https://ewn.co.za/2019/05/14/the-provinces-with-the-highest-unemployment-rates-from-2009-2019>

poverty in the province effectively. With a strong rural base in the province, the Premier should consider how to bolster the rural economy.

The housing backlog in the Eastern Cape stands at 660 000 units according to the Human Settlements [MEC's Budget and Policy speech for 2019/20](#)⁴. The Premier should also highlight the plan to improve housing delivery and the welfare of households in informal settlements through improved sanitation, access to water, electricity and create more habitable human settlements. The [2018 General Household Survey](#) indicated that, 13.1% of households in the country live in informal settlements. The Premier should prioritise the creation of integrated human settlements that enhance the wellbeing of the people living in informal settlements. In addition, the Premier should have a clear outline on accessing more urban land for human settlements.

In so far as the environmental challenges facing the Province are concerned, the Constitution provides for the right to an environment which is not harmful to human health and well-being, together with the complementary right to have the environment protected by way of legislative measures. Correspondingly, South Africa has an impressive basket of environmental protection statutes, for which the Provincial Government has numerous implementation responsibilities. Despite this, however, the last four Addresses have been silent in relation to the Province's environmental governance mandate, which is synonymous with the paltry budget consistently allocated to it, and a stark indicator of the weight attached to it by the Administration. In view of the extent to which the environmental integrity of the Province is being eroded by human activity, and the implications of this for all who reside within it, it remains to be seen whether this year's address signals a departure from preceding ones by including visionary pronouncements on this most fundamental of concerns.

Many schools have unsafe or inappropriate infrastructure. According to the 2019 [National Education Infrastructure Management System \(NEIMS\)](#), the Eastern Cape has 1 587 (one thousand five hundred and eighty-seven) schools with pit latrines as the only form of toilets. The 2019 [Adjusted Estimates of Provincial Revenue and Expenditure](#) reported that 10 out of a targeted 178 schools were supplied with sanitation facilities.⁵ The Department of Education is failing to provide proper sanitation to public schools. The department should develop and publish publicly an action plan for performance reviews covering the to hold non-performing contractors and project managers accountable.⁶

⁴Eastern Cape Human Settlements MEC budget and Policy Speech 2019/20. Online: <https://www.ecdhs.gov.za/index.php/speeches/?wpdmc=policy-speech>

⁵ Eastern Cape Adjusted Estimates of Provincial Revenue and Expenditure 2019/20 at page 148.

⁶ Report on Senior Management Service Compliance with Performance Agreements in the Eastern Cape Provincial Administration.

The performance of the national and provincial departments of health need urgent evaluation in light of the NHI Bill becoming an Act. In an attempt to fix the public healthcare system to make it NHI ready, is the President's proposed performance agreements and district development model the answer to the poor state of public health? In a [report](#) written on Senior Management Service Compliance with Performance Agreements in the Eastern Cape Provincial Administration, it was recorded that 154 performance agreements were required from the Eastern Cape Department of Health and only 54 were submitted.

Persistent failures by Members of the Executive Council (MECs) to meet their service delivery objectives are of grave concern. Premier Mabuzyane must hold MECs to account and ensure that this poor performance is resolved. Performance management in the public service sector is guided by the Public Service Act and the Public Service Regulations, among others. The Premier has a role of ensuring that all the MECs not only sign but also comply with their performance agreements.

It will be years before the National Health Insurance (NHI) can be fully implemented towards equitable healthcare for all. This begs the question of what is going to be done about the current state of public healthcare. Will medico-legal claims with a contingent liability of R20 billion once again consume the majority of the budget intended for service delivery? This question is significant in light of some of the key service delivery issues such as the [reduction by approximately 50% of Emergency Medical Service \(EMS\)](#) due to shortages of emergency medical officers.

In its 2018/19 Annual Report, the Eastern Cape Department of Health (ECDoH) recorded an amount of R 446,794 million unauthorised expenditure; expenditure incurred without provisions being made for it in the budget approved. The ECDoH outlined unbudgeted medico-legal claims by the department as the primary reason for the unauthorised expenditure.

Community health workers (CHW's) are responsible for bringing the community towards healthcare services and vice versa. In March 2019, community health workers in the Eastern Cape were recorded at 5 184⁷, less than the 1:600 which is required. This shortage adversely affects the province's ability to efficiently respond to communicable and non-communicable diseases more so in clinics where there is a shortage of nurses. [With a youth unemployment rate of 50.8%](#) in the Eastern Cape, more innovative and urgent interventions are needed to

⁷ Eastern Cape Health improves payment and conditions of service for community health workers South African Government (Assessed on 24 February 2020 at <https://www.gov.za/speeches/conditions-service-community-health-workers%C2%A0-7-mar-2019-0000>)

address this problem such offering skills development and training for youth in community healthcare work.

The PSAM calls for improved performance in provincial departments particularly those responsible for the delivery of essential services. The Premier must ensure that all the MECs comply with their performance agreements and are held to account for weak governance and poor delivery of services in their departments. Decisive leadership is required to address slow service delivery, high unemployment and dysfunctional municipalities.

For more information contact:

Esteri Msindo: Human Settlements Researcher: esteri.msindo@ru.ac.za

Nicholas Scarr: Environmental Governance Researcher: n.scarr@ru.ac.za

Siyabulela Fobosi: Education Researcher: s.fobosi@ru.ac.za

Tlamelo Mothudi: Health Researcher: t.mothudi@ru.ac.za

Public Service Accountability Monitor (PSAM)
School of Journalism & Media Studies
Rhodes University
South
Africa
(w) +27 46 603 83585
Twitter: @PSAM_AFRICA
www.psam.org.za