



North West Provincial Legislature Office

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NW Provincial Legislature, Unit 1, Mmabatho

Debate
Budget – COGTA
Hon. CJ Steyl
23 July 2025

Hon. Speaker

Honourable Speaker,

Provincial Disaster Management is in a state of disaster, just like all North West Municipalities are.

Just like the ANC can't face the political change that started in 2024, so too is this provincial government unable to face the impact of climate change and natural disasters.

Severe weather over the last year exposed this provincial government's inability to respond and limit the impact of natural disasters.

Likewise, the Department of Cooperative Governance is also unable to effectively respond to the concerns of residents who endure the brunt of failed local government and the deterioration of basic service delivery within every single North West Municipality.

Honourable Speaker,

Residents experienced massive flooding throughout the province. This saw some roads washed away.

Bridges collapsed.

Electricity blackouts were the norm, and, of course, water and sanitation services were disrupted.

What this tells us is that despite enjoying access to the most scientific weather forecasting system in the world, our disaster management capabilities are unable to mobilise before natural disasters strike.

There is absolutely no early warning system.

What compounds the impact of these disasters is also directly linked to ageing and dilapidated infrastructure, dysfunctional spatial planning, poor maintenance, unequipped, understaffed, under-resourced, and poorly trained local emergency and fire services, and a failure to adhere to the provisions of the National Veld and Forest Fire Act and ineffective monitoring of compliance by municipalities.

In short, Honourable Speaker, disaster management and its related services are reactive instead of preventative, and when disaster strikes, the socio-economic damage is severe, often stretching into billions of Rands.

Despite the massive financial impact of floods, drought and fire, only R16 million is allocated to disaster management.

The Provincial Disaster Management Centre is plagued by vacancies.

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The positions for the Provincial Head of Disaster Management, the Assistant Director of Municipal Disaster Management, two Senior Municipal Support Officers, the Senior Fire Service Administrator, the Assistant Director for Information Management and Communication, the Senior Information Management and Communication Officer, and an Administration Clerk are all vacant.

The Provincial Disaster Management Centre is itself in a state of disaster, vacant, much like the hundreds of thousands of hectares that are vacant after the ravages of fire.

It then explains why district and local disaster data is so wishy-washy.

In Ditsobotla, the average response time to fire is reported to be between 10 and 70 minutes. Small wonder the town hall was already gutted by the time a fire truck showed up.

In Ratlou, disaster response is up to 90 minutes. In Madibeng the response to fire is reported to be less than 21 minutes, and in Rustenburg the statistical response time is indicated as “a swift response time.”

Honourable Speaker,

Now if Rustenburg’s track record in service delivery is anything to go by, specifically in delivering water, then swift, as per the municipality’s definition, is very long indeed.

Disaster management must be taken seriously. More funding must be made available. R16 million is not enough.

Disaster management must be part of an integrated economic development policy framework in which there is an incorporated climate change adaptation strategy.

Honourable Speaker,

Local government also finds itself in a state of disaster.

Despite the efforts of COGTA to assist and support North West Municipalities, and the almost R300 million invested by this department to support local government with development and planning – by the department’s own admission, there is no tangible improvement in basic service delivery.

This R300 million must also be seen as additional funding to local government on top of the billions municipalities receive to support local government.

The Sixth administration between 2019 and 2024 placed 20 municipalities under Section 139 administration. Both Mamusa and Ditsobotla were dissolved, fresh elections were held, and yet today, both municipalities have collapsed.

The remaining 18 municipalities recorded no improvement in service delivery or governance.

This department is now engaged with a fresh round of Section 139 interventions into 11 municipalities.

This department is operating on repeat. All the while the delivery of basics like water, electricity, and sanitation services continues to deteriorate.

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While MEC Oageng Molapisi acknowledges the problems, he is politically bound from taking decisive action, empowered by legislation, to act.

And still, it is residents who suffer while political considerations are made instead of taking tangible action to restore good governance and improve service delivery.

The collapsed state of local government and the inability to deliver services is criminal. And the time has come to decisively deal with this criminality.

As per the North West provincial government's own admission, only 58% of the 1,2 million households have a flush toilet, while only 53% receive weekly refuse removal services.

Shockingly, only 43% of households enjoy access to piped water.

Water and electricity supply disruptions are the norm, while raw sewage spills over into communities, polluting the environment and causing a public health crisis.

Honourable Speaker,

North West Municipalities are dysfunctional. Despite this department's efforts, unfunded budgets are still being adopted.

The implementation of SPLUMA is a mere tick-box exercise. All Municipal Planning Tribunals are dysfunctional. This has a negative impact not only on local economic development, but also hampers the registration of title deeds, as the Department of Human Settlement admits.

There is not a single local economic development plan. Because any such plan would require the maintenance of infrastructure above 8% of a municipality's budget – the best this province can do is allocate 5% on an unfunded budget.

Honourable Speaker,

Unless real intervention takes place, realignment instead of redeployment.

Consequences instead of talk shops and political lip service.

The DA cannot support this budget.

We can reconsider our support when municipalities are working for the people by delivering clean water in every tap, the collection and responsible disposal of refuse every week, providing electricity when needed, maintaining roads are maintained, and Councils function optimally to ensure local economic development and job creation.

We reject the R681 million budget for Cooperative Governance.

End.

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