

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT RESPONDS TO THE GRIEVANCES OF MTUBATUBA COMMUNITY

A high-level government delegation tasked by the KwaZulu-Natal Premier to attend to the grievances of the people of Mtubatuba today responded positively to the community demands during a feedback session held at Mfekay Community Hall.

Led by the MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, Mxolisi Kaunda and the MEC for Human Settlement and Public Works, Ravi Pillay, the delegation met the community of Mfekaye and Zamimpilo in Mtubatuba at a packed local hall.

The feedback session comes in the wake of a wave of protests which resulted in the closure of N2 and looting of trucks and wanton destruction of public property over a period of three days last week.

The protest saw the shutdown of the N2 major arterial route between the towns of Mtubatuba and Hluhluwe, resulting in untold inconvenience to road users travelling to Far North of the province. The protesters had running battles with police who had been sent to restore order.

Among the demands raised by the community include, upgrading of access roads, clinic, police station, electricity, toilets and water. COGTA reported that the electrification programme has started with 500 houses in the area. Access roads which are the responsibility of municipalities have been allocated the budget and plans are in place to commence with construction as from 1 July 2018.

The District Municipality reported that the water supply in the area has been hampered by drought which affected the entire province. Apart from this, water reservoirs broke pumps in the area which the municipality has begun to address. Plans are also underway to increase the capacity of water dispensed by the reservoir daily.

Regarding the building of a clinic, while plans are being finalised to build a clinic, the Department of Health will increase the number of mobile clinics which will visit all affected areas on weekly basis. The Department will also set up a committee which will ensure that the mobile clinics are distributed and operating effectively in the area.

On the issue of housing, government has already started to build houses in Mtubatuba but there are households that are still outstanding. MEC Pillay said that the municipality has already started the procurement process to build houses for outstanding households in the area. In the process, the Department of Human Settlement will ensure that companies that are appointed build quality houses. "The department will also monitor this process for the next 30 days and if there are challenges we will intervene directly," said Pillay. The MEC will return in the area in September to handover appointed contractors per ward. The project will start with 100 most destitute families in each ward identified through Operation Sukuma Sakhe.

In an effort to deal with crime in the area, government begun a process of building a satellite police station in the area which was interrupted after the community

demanded the appointment of a local contractor. In the interim, the police have allocated a mobile police station which operates from 08:00-16:00 in crime hotspots. Kaunda said that the police management in the cluster has also developed a plan to ensure that police deployments are increased in the area. He urged members of the community to desist from embarking on illegal violent protests and blockading roads and use proper channels to raise their grievances. "Anyone who want to organise a protest march must obtain a permit from the local authorities and without this permit police must act and arrest illegal protesters," said Kaunda.