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## INNOVATIVE WAYS ON THE CARDS AMIDST COST CONTAINMENT MEASURES



L-R Mr Mlokothe, Ms De Wet and Mr Tseku

At a two-day Strategic Planning session for the Department in Port Alfred newly, the acting Head of Department (HoD), Mr Vuyo Mlokothe said the cost containment measures issued by National Treasury meant that Cogta must find “strategic integrated innovations to deliver quality services with integrity and ethically” to communities. He added that the measures will impact adversely to the planning documents of the department hence the need to amend accordingly.

“We are required, at the end of the session to align policy objectives with the Cabinet Lekgotla, Revised Medium Term Strategic Framework outcomes and Integrated Development Plans Priorities,” said Mr Mlokothe. He added that the MEC’s Policy Priorities for 2024/25 should be infused in our plans towards credible APP 2024/25 and AOP 2024/25.



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Mr Mlokothi decried what he termed “unethical leadership” in local government which is a hindrance towards building a capable, ethical and Development State. “The current state is characterised by the politicisation of local government administration, bad employment practices, lack of accountability, abuse of power etc. However, in Cogta we also have pockets of these unethical conducts,” said Mr Mlokothi.

Regarding strategic outlook of Cogta, Mr Mlokothi said the reviewed Municipal Support and Intervention Framework (MSIF) will be applied within the context of the District Development Model (DDM) in municipalities. “The recently EXCO approved support through workstreams led by Deputy Director Generals (DDGs) of different departments gives an impetus to our work. The workstreams focus on Municipal Audits, Municipal Grants, Municipal Debts, Basic Services and Disaster Management,” said Mr Mlokothi.

He added that the need to complete the transformation process of Traditional Councils (TC) as well as Cogta's contribution to the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act 3 of 2019 (TKLA) and Regulations is urgent.

In his message of support on behalf of organised labour, the Secretary of National Health and Workers Union (NEHAWU), Mr Lindokuhle Tseku raised the issue of telephones that are not working for more than nine months.

“This has resulted in the interruption of business continuity and we request additional cell phones to do our jobs effectively including calling candidates for interviews among other things,” said Mr Tseku

On the issue of function shift, Mr Tseku spoke of the ‘forceful’ transfer of employees to the Office of the Premier (OTP). “The non delegation of powers to recognise or withdraw a recognition by the Premier (does not) warrant a transfer of personnel from Cogta. The President recognises Kings (all the time) and that has not resulted to the movement of personnel to the Presidency. These employees must be returned to COGTA,” said Mr Tseku.

He said they lauded the improvement in the appointment of internal candidates and urged management to maintain the momentum. Mr Tseku said they welcomed the lifting of suspension of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) which brings hope for a restoration of stability in the department. (Equally, we request management to investigate allegations of corruption thoroughly and communicate its outcomes to clear the name of the department.”

Meanwhile also speaking at the strategic planning session on municipal audit outcomes for 2021/22 financial year, Ms Tracey De Wet, Deputy Business Executive in the Auditor General's Office said the outcomes have improved for the third consecutive year. “This is a positive upward trajectory which indicates that the improvements can be sustained. However, we still see instances where some municipalities are regressing and are taking the province backwards from the few steps it has taken forward,” said Ms DeWet. **By Thando Sonjica**