



Address by the Chairperson of the NCOP, Honourable Thandi Modise, on the Taking Parliament to the People in the Free State Province – Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality

Taking Parliament to the People Assembly:

The 2017 Taking Parliament to the People Programme takes place under the theme “**Celebrating 20 years of the Constitution and 20 years since the establishment of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP): Deepening Parliamentary oversight for delivery of quality services to our people at *Kaizer Sebothelo Stadium on 21 – 25 August 2017.*** This follows on our visit to the Xariep District on 15 – 19 May 2017.

The theme is apt in that the Programme takes place at the time when we celebrate 20 years of our Constitution and 20 years since the establishment of the National Council of Provinces.

As we did in Xariep, we shall continue here in Mangaung City Metro to focus on the delivery of health and related services to the people as well as the maintenance of health facilities in the Province. Health is one of the objectives of the National Development Plan (the NDP). The NDP envisages the National Health Insurance (NHI) as key to achieving equity, efficiency, effectiveness and quality of health care provision, universal health coverage, and a significant reduction in the risk posed by social determinants of diseases, as well as adverse ecological factors. Agenda 2063 also envisages Africa where African people have a high standard of living, and quality of life, sound health and well-being. The Sustainable



Development Goals seek to achieve similar objectives of good health and wellbeing. As the legislative body we have the responsibility to oversee the realisation of these objectives by the Executive and to ensure that the people that we represent have access quality health care.

During our Pre-visits in the Xariep District Municipality on 15 – 19 May 2017, and the research conducted in the Mangaung City Metro, we discovered that water supply to health and education facilities, sanitation, patient transport (ambulances), staff shortage and aging infrastructure are some of the major challenges facing the provision of quality health care to the people.

We, as members of the National Council of Provinces we had first-hand experience of the challenges relating to the provision of water to health care facilities during our oversight in the Xariep District. We witnessed nurses/caregivers fetching water with buckets in order to flush toilets. We witnessed nurses/caregivers not washing their hands before treating patients due to shortage of water. We realised that uninterrupted water supply is necessary for delivery of quality health services. No health or education facility can operate without water.

Secondly, although government develops infrastructure, in most instances departments and government entities do not budget for maintenance of infrastructure. If they do, the budget is sometimes diverted to either compensation of employees or other activities. As a result, infrastructure collapses. That is the state of most of our health facilities. It is therefore necessary to maintain effective oversight over the Executive to ensure that there is both delivery of quality services and proper maintenance of infrastructure meant for the delivery of such services.

In our quest to ensure delivery of quality services, we have already met with relevant national and provincial departments in an attempt to address this dire situation in the Province. We have also met with the relevant local municipalities and Bloem Water, an entity responsible for water supply in Xariep and Mangaung City Metro. We expect them to respond to these issues during the course of this week.

From 21 – 24 August 2017, we shall hold public hearings at Kaizer Sebothelo Stadium where members of the public will have an opportunity to raise issues on health and related matters. The public hearings on Monday and Tuesday will focus on health, and will include interaction with the responsible executive members at both national and provincial levels. The Minister of Health, Honourable Aaron Motsoaledi and MEC for Health in the Free State Province, Honourable Butana Khompela, have confirmed attendance. Since we will also focus on health facilities in correctional facilities, Minister of Correctional Services, Honourable Michael Masutha has also confirmed attendance on Monday. The Ministers and MEC will respond to issues raised in the public hearings.

On Wednesday the focus will be on economic development. The MEC responsible for economic development, Honourable Benny Malakoane, has confirmed attendance. Unfortunately, due to Cabinet meetings, Ministers responsible for Trade and Industry and Economic Development are unable to attend.

Thursday will be dedicated to local government, water and sanitation, finance and education. The Ministers and MECs responsible for these portfolios have all confirmed attendance. They are Minister for Finance Honourable Malusi Gigaba, Minister for

Basic Education Honourable Angie Motshekga, MEC for Education Honourable Tate Makgoe, MEC for Finance Honourable Elsabe Rockman and MEC Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs Sisi Ntombela, amongst others.

The intention of this public hearing is to consider the provision of water and sanitation to health and education facilities, the maintenance of infrastructure and how these may be financed. The public hearing will also deal with the support that national and provincial government provide to local government to enable it to carry out its obligations as required by section 154 of the Constitution.

Parallel to the public hearings will be oversight visits to health facilities in the Mangaung City Metro. This will include clinics, hospitals and facilities in correctional facilities.

In both the public hearings and oversight visits, members of the National Council of Provinces will be joined by Members of the provincial legislatures and councillors.

The Programme will culminate with the Address by the Deputy President, His Excellency Honourable Cyril Ramaphosa, to the House on 25 August 2017. This will be a formal sitting of the House. On an annual basis the President and Deputy President address the House on a rotational basis. During his address, we expect Deputy President to touch on some of the issues raised during the week.

That will then conclude our week. The committees of the Provincial Legislature and the National Council of Provinces will however continue to follow-up on issues raised during the week. We will also

have a report back session in 2018 to ensure that the objectives of the Programme are realised.

The Programme gives effect to the mandate of the National Council as the melting pot of co-operative government and intergovernmental relations.

Thank you!