

**Remarks by KwaZulu-Natal Finance MEC, Mr Ravi Pillay, at the launch of Operation Khawuleza in uMgungundlovu District, delivered on 21 November 2019 at the Caluza Sports Fields.**

Programme Director

District Mayor Cllr Maphumulo

Mayors of local municipalities

District and local councilors

Chairperson of the local house of traditional leaders, inkosi Mthuli

Amakhosi under the local house

Religious and community leaders present

Ladies and gentlemen

I bring you warm greetings from the entire provincial executive council, especially from my Cogta counterpart Mr Sipho Hlomuka through whose department operation Khawuleza is being implemented and from Premier Sihle Zikalala whose leadership has re-energised our quest to serve all the people of this beautiful province.

I am excited to launch this innovative programme aimed at accelerating the delivery of services to our communities.

Through this programme we are saying to the people of uMgungundlovu District: we have heard your cries regarding service delivery; we are aware of your frustrations, we feel your pain and we are acting. We are saying here is our immediate response to those concerns.

Through Operation Khawuleza we are also putting into action the commitment made by Premier Sihle Zikalala in the State of the Province Address (SOPA) that in this term of office “we will pay undivided attention to all municipalities”.

Part of that task includes us as the provincial government ensuring that this sphere of government is capacitated so that it is able to carry out its mandate of providing services to our people.

I have no doubt that walking in here you would have noticed the water tanker, a honey sucker, a TLB, a refuse compactor truck, a padfoot roller and a walk-behind roller. That is how we are capacitating this district.

All this equipment, which costs R10 million, will be used attend to key service delivery challenges such as the maintenance of roads including the fixing of potholes, and the provision of sanitation and water in the seven local municipalities under district.

Similar machinery is being handed over to all the other regions in the province and the total amount being spent by the province is R125-million.

We are confident that this endeavor will enable municipalities to meet the service delivery needs of our communities at an increased pace.

For example with the Khawuleza machinery it is envisaged that municipalities can fix about 500 potholes a month.

We also believe that accelerating the pace of service delivery will increase investor confidence in our municipalities. In cases where it has been eroded, investor confidence will only be restored when key infrastructure, such as roads, water and sanitation are in place and are functional.

I must caution the leadership of municipalities present here that Cogta, I as the Champion MEC and the Champion HOD will be monitoring the use of this machinery very closely because we want to ensure that it does what it is intended for.

Municipalities using this machinery are expected to report monthly on how it has been used to improve service delivery.

It would be counter-productive for us to come here, make song and dance about this initiative only for the machinery to go and park at a yard somewhere. This is not a publicity stunt. We must see value for money!

Programme Director,

Before coming to this event we held a joint Exco meeting where we received reports on the state of local government in this district.

Reports presented at that meeting are a result of a painstaking assessment conducted by Cogta and Treasury following a directive by the Premier.

Through that exercise, which was meant to give us a deeper understanding of the challenges, we identified a number of factors that are affecting the performance of these municipalities.

These include lack of capacity, lack of consequence management, weak controls and oversight and high water and electricity losses to name a few.

We then developed support plans for all the municipalities and I am happy to report that these have since been adopted by the municipalities concerned.

Cogta has thus set aside the first week of December as a week in which teams will be providing support to municipalities in this district so that they are assisted to resolve key challenges that have been identified. There will also be ongoing support.

Ladies and gentlemen, this government is committed to clean and good governance. We will not hesitate to take tough action where we have to just like we have done in the recent past.

Before the elections we came to you saying Thuma Mina (send me) you did exactly that through your ballots cast on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May. You then then instructed us, your public representatives, to hurry up (Khawuleza) and we are doing just that.

I thank you.