

## **The collapse and non-existence of roads in the North West: a true reflection of the failure of the ANC**

*By Sello Seitholo MP – DA Member on the Portfolio Committee on Transport*

Honourable Chairperson,

Today we debate the national Department of Transport's budget. A budget that Honourable Chris Hunsinger pointed out as being one where service delivery does not feature.

While this budget is a "same old, same old" budget, the service delivery outcomes thereof are not aligned with the experiences that millions of South Africans have on our roads. Honourable Hunsinger's speech highlighted the two components that facilitate Transport budget functions to the people, one of which includes the implementation of transport functions which happens through provinces.

Unfortunately for the North West, the complete collapse of provincial and municipal road infrastructure is the reason why this budget is nothing but a "ghost" budget. This province has been mismanaged by the failed ANC for the past 28 years. The infrastructure collapse in the form of roads in the North West proves that there is no coordination between national and provincial spheres of government, and that that which this national department seeks to achieve, will remain a pipedream for as long as the ANC is in government.

In a reply to a written question on the allocation of the Provincial Road Maintenance Grant (PRMG) to North West from 2011 to 2020, the Department noted that the North West had received R7 billion with almost R2 billion of the total amount sent back to National Treasury as unspent.

The culture of unspent funds by the North West is well documented. A News24 article published on 3 April 2022, noted that the North West, which has one of the worst service delivery records in the country, was on the verge of giving back R17 billion of a total combined budget of R57.4 billion to National Treasury because its departments had failed to spend money.

Note also Chairperson that this is a province whose departments have been under section 100 intervention for the past 3 years, including its Public Works and Roads Department.

Chairperson, this failure to spend money on service delivery, specifically the building, upgrading and maintenance of both provincial and municipal roads has had dire consequences and results for the people of the North West.

Residents in several rural communities in the North West have horror stories to tell.

Dunga Tshilo, a resident in Modimong Village in Greater Taung, explains how back in 2006 the late premier Edna Molewa introduced the building of road D210. To date, that road linking Cokonyane and Modimong villages is still a ghost, making the almost 12 km travel between the two villages difficult for emergency medical services and public transport, especially when there are heavy rains.

In the villages of Tlapeng, Mocweding, Mokasa and Matlapaneng, road D201 which was promised to be upgraded from gravel to tar back in 2011 was re-graveled to the tune of R18 million, only to leave residents

unable to access public transport, schools and tuck shops due to the condition of the road after torrential rains a month after the said re-gravelling.

The residents of Matsheng, Kokomeng, Molelema and connecting villages were excited to have the D206-D208 upgraded from gravel to tar. The 10 km road would have created easy access to more than five villages in the Ba-Ga-Maidi area. Unfortunately, after two years of having the site abandoned by the contractor after 56% work was completed and with well over R40 million spent, the residents of Molelema have now resorted to fixing their own road as it has now been completely destroyed by rains while the Department and the contractor remain locked in a battle royal in court.

Chairperson, Pieter Ernest, a broiler farmer for Supreme Chicken in Leeudoringstad, is in danger of losing his contract due to the terrible state of the road. Every 40 days, his farm produces more than 500 000 chickens. About 55 trucks are used to transport the chickens and deliver 1 500 tons of feed. These trucks use road D1248 (a provincial road) to access the farm. 39 households will be affected should this termination take place.

On Workers Day, Members of the Montshioa Methodist Church of Southern Africa in Mahikeng, were forced to fill potholes found in the streets near the church. Community members, business forums, and taxi associations across the North West province have had to dig deep into their pockets to fix access roads. All this due to the failure of the ANC to govern.

On 7 May, public figure Lebo Molax posted a video on his Facebook page about the current state of the N12 road in the City of Matlosana. He jokingly said, as I paraphrase, that people no longer need to go to Kimberly in order to see the big hole; the holes on the N12 were enough to become a tourist attraction. This is deeply saddening.

Chairperson, while I may have singled out the North West here today, the reality is that provinces such as the Northern Cape, Free State and others, know exactly what I am talking about in as far as the conditions of their provincial and municipal road network is concerned.

I thank you.