**FFPlus in the NCOP rejects Minister Dlamini-Zuma’s COGTA budget for utterly failing to deliver on its core mandate**

**NCOP debate on COGTA budget vote**

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The Freedom Front Plus in the National Council of Provinces rejects the budget of the Department of Cooperative Governance because of its failure to ensure that provinces and municipalities carry out their service delivery and development functions effectively. It’s core mandate.

Ke tjwerwe go thlala , Ke batla dijo , mina lambile , I am Hungry. The sounds of hunger-pains are echoing over all of South Africa?

On 4 March 2020 Minister Dlamini Zuma Declared a national state of disaster as a result of a persistant drought throughout South Africa. Food security and the well-being of all South Africans was supposed to be a priority, but the disaster funds were instead used to kick start the ANC’s Covid- 19 election campaign.

Consider that the conditional grants for Agriculture, Land reform and Rural development were adjusted downward by R438 mill; and Comprehensive Agricultural Support programs were allocated R317mil Less

The Agricultural sector is in dire need of financial support; famine is knocking on South Africa’s door. The agricultural sector must not be taken for granted. Its contribution is vital and the government must stop treating agriculture like a step-child.

In the Macmillan Dictionary failure is defined as: a mistake or a failure, especially of something that was expected to be good;

A fiasco as; a complete and [embarrassing](https://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/embarrassing) [failure](https://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/failure): and a debacle as; something that [fails](https://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/fail_1) [completely](https://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/completely) in an [embarrassing](https://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/embarrassing) way.

All of these describe the performance of The Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA).

The purpose of COGTA is to improve cooperative governance across the three spheres of government, in partnership with institutions of traditional leadership, to ensure that provinces and municipalities carry out their service delivery and development functions effectively. This department has failed to fulfil its sole mandate**!**

If you give a child poison you cannot expect it to remain healthy, but this is precisely what the department of local government is expecting to happen. The fact is that municipalities across the country have failing infrastructure, and are allowing raw sewage to run into rivers and underground water sources.

This is happening without any serious attempt to bring the failing infrastructure up to standard. Corruption and an absence of control are the order of the day.

The latest Auditor Generals’ 2018/2019 -findings show that: Out of the 257 Municipalities, only 20 had unqualified Audit outcomes with NO Findings. The Audit outcomes of 46 municipalities regressed and 28 Municipalities had outstanding Audits.

Here is a glimpse of the stark reality of municipal finances after having a brief look at the 229 completed Audits:

# 34% of municipalities ended the year in a deficit

# Lastly 31% of municipalities are in a vulnerable financial position.

South Africa is, at the moment, borrowing billions of Rands after the government, and specifically COGTA, have allowed corruption, mismanagement and an absolute refusal to call cadres to account, to cost the country billions.

That which should have been done during the last 26 years is now being done during a lockdown at a massive cost.

The problem is that much of the money now being spent is on temporary solutions. Temporary housing, temporary water supply that have to be filled with tankers, and temporary classrooms. For many this looks like an expensive campaign mounted shortly before a municipal election with taxpayers’ money.

The irony is that, in spite of the fact that 229 municipalities had irregular expenditure to the tune of R21.46 Billion in the 2018/2019 financial year and R16.63 Billion in 2017/2018, the same MEC’s, Mayors, Municipal managers and CFO’s are entrusted with an additional R624 Billion in a revised division of revenue allocation! The scary part is that these funds will be spent without the standard supply chain management procedures, that controlled spending somewhat. National Treasury estimates that several municipalities saw revenue drop by 40% to 60% in April 2020.

The FF Plus cannot support this revised budget.