

The Weekly

FS GOVERNMENT OUTLINES SERVICE DELIVERY GAINS

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Free State premier, Ace Magashule and members of his executive council told the citizens of the province during the TNA media breakfast held on Wednesday at the City Hall in Bloemfontein that the provincial government has made strides in improving the lives of the poor over the past three years. Magashule said the provincial government has delivered on the promises it has made in 2009 when he took over as the premier.

The premier said the provincial government has increased access to medicines, provided bursaries to more than 6 000 students and rebuilt more than 1 300 dilapidated houses for the people of the province.

He said the provincial government will intensify its communication with the citizens of the province and listen to their needs and challenges. He said the provincial government was committed to implementing Free State Vision 2030 adopted by cabinet to grow the provincial economy and create more jobs while fighting poverty.

All nine MECs who accompanied the premier during the face to face interaction with the public gave progress made by their departments to improve the lives of the poor and vulnerable in the province. Free State MEC for cooperative governance, human settlements and traditional affairs, Olly Mlamleli, said the provincial government has completed 13 000 out of the 20 000 incomplete houses since 2009.

The remaining 7 000 will be completed in the next financial year, which starts in April this year. "There were various problems that the department encountered when we took office such as poor workmanship by the contractors. Some of these houses were claimed as completed and paid for but in reality they were not. In the province we had 20 000 incomplete houses and to date we managed to complete 13 000 while other 7 000 will be completed in the next financial year.

"We took a decision not to build new houses and focus on completing incomplete ones. We could not build new houses while we had unfinished ones throughout the province," said Mlamleli.

MEC for social development, Sisi Ntombela, told a packed hall that her department has in collaboration with the department of education assisted more than 360 people who could not finish their matric to do so.

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“We have partnered with the education department and took 365 young people back to school who now passed their matric because we realised that most of people are unemployed because they do not have a matric certificate. They end up depending solely on social grants. We are trying to move them away from depending government and help them to be able to do fend for themselves,” said Ntombela.

Free State agriculture MEC, Msebenzi Zwane, said his department has set aside R9-million for continuously training emerging black farmers. Zwane said the training is aimed at equipping black farmers with technical, financial and management to enable them to run sustainable farms.

The MEC said government had noted that most black farmers who were beneficiaries of government’s land redistribution programme could not sustain their farms with most of them remaining white elephants.

He said government has initiated successful agricultural projects such as the Xhariep Fish Hatchery which is providing food and employment to local residents.

With regards to crime and public, the MEC for police, roads and transport, Butana Komphela, said the provincial government’s law enforcement agencies will in future clamp down on violent service delivery protests.

“We have been very lenient and avoided to fully implement the might of law in dealing with these violent protests which lead to damage of property. We have now decided that we will implement the full letter of the law.” Komphela.

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