

EZOTHUKELA NEWS

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District Mayor evaluates projects in Weenen

In the spirit of the call to serve the community selflessly, Uthukela District Mayor Cllr AS Mazibuko hit the road running to visit the water and sanitation projects in Weenen under Inkosi Langalibalele municipality. He was accompanied by the Chairperson for Water, Sanitation and Technical Services Cllr S Dlungwane, Speaker Cllr PG Strydom and officials. First stop was at the water reticulation project construction site which is aimed to supply water in Ward 20. The project started in June 2020 and is expected to be completed by end of June 2021.

According to the briefing by service providers and technical staff, the project is overcoming technical, labour and social issues as it progresses but both the contractor and engineers are trying hard to manage the situation. About 400 households stand to benefit from the project once completed. The engineers informed the Mayor that they have got a strong technical team to run the project successfully. The project is currently 32% complete. The Mayor was happy with the progress made so far.

"We are quite happy with the progress made so far. The councillors should be on board in order for the project to go smoothly. If you try to stop the project it simply means you are affecting its completion time. But overall we are happy with the progress", said Mayor Mazibuko. The team then went to visit the sanitation project in Ezitendeni. The service provider explained that they cannot commission the sewer pump station until the water plant is commissioned. There are also technical issues pertaining to the sanitation pump station.

Mayor Mazibuko was concerned about security issues especially during the time when vandalism of infrastructure is on the rise. At the waste water treatment construction site, the contractor is progressing well in spite of the social challenges faced but they are being managed. There are backlogs experienced in terms of getting construction material. No technical issue was reported and they have a good working relationship with the consultants. The team was taken to a walk-about around the plant. The plant is expected to take up to 18 months to complete.

During the debriefing session Cllr Dlungwane said that the purpose of the projects was to give service to the people, build infrastructure and to empower our people. Speaker Strydom was impressed with the structures that she saw and said they were of quality. "I think we need to have a community meeting to iron out some of the issues raised. Our service providers should therefore stick to time frame to complete the project", said the Speaker. Mayor Mazibuko also said it was important for them as political leadership to honour and keep their promises.

He was, however, worried about the previous contractor who failed to deliver. "More delays experienced means lack of service delivery. This area has benefited a lot in terms of projects implemented by the district municipality. All stakeholders need to engage each other in order to see the success of the projects. Skills development and skills transfer are very critical. We must also be mindful of the issue of sabotaging of our programmes", the Mayor concluded.

Uthukela leadership monitor progress in Oliphantskop

Uthukela District Mayor Cllr AS Mazibuko led an oversight visit to the Oliphantskop Dam where refurbishment work is currently underway. He was accompanied by the Deputy Mayor Cllr NW Mchunu, Alfred Duma Chief Whip Cllr T Njapha, Technical Services unit and officials.

The team received briefing from the project management consultants on arrival and were taken to a tour viewing the progress made in relation to the project. Unlike during the previous visits, service providers seem to have made quite a remarkable progress with the project. At the present moment the plant is 50% operational. According to the programme, the project is expected to finish in March 2021.



Cllr Mazibuko, Cllr Mchunu and Cllr Njapha on site

Basically, after receiving the briefing and seeing things for himself the Mayor was pleased with the progress in terms of the work that has been done. According to the consultants if it was not for the lockdown period and other unforeseen delays experienced the project would have been completed by end of October 2020. The plant will be revisited to see if it is keeping up with its timeline in due course.



Mayor Mazibuko on site assessing progress

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UThukela continues to evaluate more water projects

The team from UThukela District Municipality led by Chairperson for Water, Sanitation and Technical Services Cllr S Dlungwane visited Moyeni area under Okhahlamba municipality. He was accompanied by Okhahlamba Deputy Mayor Cllr T Ngozo, Mayoral Office Manager L Mthonti, Special Programmes Manager B Mkhize, Technical staff and service provider.



Cllr Dlungwane is briefed by the operator

The purpose of the visit was to check on the status of water projects in the area. These projects are production boreholes and springs protection. The production borehole project has been completed but the only thing left is to energize the system. Water testing has been done and it was found to be good for consumption.

Cllr Dlungwane was, however, not entirely satisfied with the progress as he said the last time they were there the service provider promised that by this time everything would be working. There was also a huge concern raised about theft in the area where it was said a pipe connected from the borehole was once removed and stolen.

Currently people in this area rely on a water tank that is frequently filled by UThukela District through the water tanker. Mr Mthonti urged the community to look after the stand pipes as they are normally vandalized which regress the progress.

Five stand pipes are already connected to the production borehole and about 60 households in the area stand to benefit from the project. Cllr asked the service provider to also add one more stand pipe for the benefit of people living beyond the main road. Service provider informed the team that the spring protection project is experiencing some challenges in relation to water and theft of out of the infrastructure.

The team then went to do oversight visit at Moyeni-Zwelisha water treatment works where a new submerged water pump was installed. The plant supplies water to wards 6, 7, 8 and 9. Challenges experienced are illegal connections. During a walk-about inside the plant it showed that everything was running smoothly.



Water clarifiers at the plant

Cllr Dlungwane was pleased with what he had seen but was only concerned with the backfilling that was still to be done. He instructed the Area Engineer to place an order for a dosing chemical to purify water in the plant.

Stakeholders commemorate World AIDS Day

Each year on December 01, organizations and individuals across the world bring attention to the HIV epidemic, endeavour to raise awareness. Uthukela District Municipality joined the world to commemorate this day when stakeholders hosted the event in Geza area under Inkosi Langalibalele Municipality.



Stakeholders march to raise HIV awareness

The MEC for Finance Ms Nomsa Dube-Ncube led the delegation that included Uthukela District Mayor Cllr AS Mazibuko, Deputy Mayor Cllr NW Mchunu, Speaker Cllr PG Strydom, Alfred Duma Mayor Cllr MV Madlala, Inkosi Langalibalele Mayor Cllr JM Mbhele, Okhahlamba Mayor Cllr M Ndlangisa, Dr T Zulu, Inkosi Sithole, Uthukela District Chairperson for Civil Society Mr Sakhile Xaba, Education District Director Ms P Mokoena, Pastor Maphalala,

Brig Bantham and SAPS, RTI, Bhokuzulu Self-Sufficient Programme, Departments of Health, Social Development, Agriculture and officials.

The theme for the 2020 observance is "We are in this together, checka impilo". Message of support for the day was delivered by Mr Sakhile Xaba who told the audience that it was important to know one's status. Mr Xaba highlighted the challenges they are experiencing in the district of children born infected with HIV but who are not accessing the medication due to the fact that their grandparents might not be informed about the disease.

"We need to go to healthcare facilities even if we feel we don't want to because of the treatment we sometimes receive there. It is important that you look well after your life to live longer", said Mr Xaba. He then encouraged all men to go to the clinics to check their status in order to live well. He also dispelled the stigma attached to the HIV saying he's been living with the disease for some time now but is healthy.

In her remarks, Dr Zulu was concerned about people who are visiting clinics saying are very few. She said they generally do not want to do things as they are told by health care professionals. Dr Zulu encouraged the audience to do regular check ups to stay alive. According to Zulu the number of HIV infections is slightly going up in the district. She said the district is doing well with 90-90-90 programme though. The only problem was that those who are already on the treatment are defaulting.

TB is another killer disease in the District yet it is curable. Dr Zulu raised an alarm about children who are under all sorts of attacks with Alfred Duma Municipality leading the pack. She also encouraged people to report such cases to the law authorities. "COVID-19 pandemic is still with us people should always wear a mask, wash hands or sanitize and keep social distancing. If you have symptoms go to seek help at the health facilities", pleaded Dr Zulu.

Keynote address was delivered by MEC Dube-Ncube who pleaded with the audience to remind one another not to forget to collect their medication from health facilities. "We thank the state President and SANAC for the good work they are doing. TLD pill that was launched by our Health Minister is highly effective and this is encouraging", alluded MEC Dube-Ncube. The MEC was concerned though that other organizations are not visible in the fight against HIV and other diseases.

Candle light was done at the end of the programme in remembrance of those who have succumbed to the disease and also in the hope for better things to come. It is said that COVID-19 is threatening the progress that the world has made in health and development over the past 20 years, including the gains we have made against HIV.



MEC Dube-Ncube with Mayor Mazibuko

Legislature monitors functionality of War Rooms in the district

A delegation from the KZN Legislature recently visited Okhahlamba municipality to monitor the functionality of War Rooms in Ngoba and Zwelisha areas. It was led by the MEC for EDTEA in her capacity as the Uthukela District Champion Ms Nomsa Dube-Ncube, Uthukela District Mayor Cllr AS Mazibuko, Deputy Mayor Cllr NW Mchunu, Speaker PG Strydom, Inkosi Hlongwane, Ward Cllr Msimanga, Sector Departments and officials.

Operation Sukuma Sakhe (OSS) started round about 2009 where its main focus was on bringing services closer to where the people live. The departments attending the War Rooms should thus bring practical solutions to the problems. Opening remarks by Uthukela District Mayor Cllr AS Mazibuko gave a brief on the situations in the municipalities and War Rooms. Uthukela District Task Team Chairperson made a commitment to do even better as OSS. "We as departments recommit ourselves to the livelihood of our people. We say all stakeholders will work together to achieve a common goal of service delivery", Dr Zulu said.



Stakeholders presence was critical during the event

What appears on the Legislature's first day visit was that some departments do not attend the meetings at the War Rooms. According to the presentations by Secretary Ms T Khoza, War Room in Ward 3 started operating in 2012 as a pilot project in Mhlwazini area then later moved to Ngoba. It has official bearers and meetings are held frequently. War Room has a Phila Mntwana programme which is very much functional. It also has as NGO, FBO, Youth Sector, CPF, Okhahlamba LM and government departments. There is a mobile clinic that visit all areas to provide primary health care services. There are many activities that have been conducted in the ward including the COVID-19 awareness campaign.

Statistics from the Department of Social Development show there are many orphans and child headed households in the ward. Some of them have received houses from the municipality and Al Imdaad Foundation. SASSA assists with food parcels distribution. There is a CPF structure to assist in terms of crime prevention in the area. War Room project was established in 2016 where members contribute towards the fund. Since then they are able to do so much activities that are assisting the community in many ways.



Social ills include HIV, diabetes and TB illnesses that are common. Alcohol abuse is also rife in the area. There is also a piggery project which aims to employ people in the area to alleviate poverty. Challenges identified are none attendance from other departments. Water shortages as the area has no running taps. Responding to the issue of water Mayor Mazibuko said there's a project that is 90% complete but a few weeks ago it was vandalized which put the progress back. There's also a plan for spring protection which is going to be implemented. Again there's a water tanker which will be assisting in water distribution in the area.

The MEC appreciated the work done by the War Room in the area. She was, however, concerned about the illegal taverns operating there and said this needed urgent intervention to close them down. On the issue of water she said the district has plenty of water but people can't access it. She then encouraged people to do one home one garden programme. The second stop was at Zwelisha Community Hall in Ward 9. War Room changed the venue in which they operate due to vandalism of property. Training on profiling has never been conducted for members. In short, it was clear that the War Room is non-existent. But that was disputed by Ward Cllr Hadebe and said that the reason why it seems like it is not existing is because members did not get required training. In the end it was agreed that War Room will meet in November to deliberate on their action plan. Inkosi Hlongwane encouraged the community to work together and respect one another to achieve greater things in life.

Legislature's social responsibility programme touches lives

The KZN Legislature Speaker Hon. N Boyce accompanied by Uthukela District Mayor Cllr AS Mazibuko and district leadership handed over school uniforms to learners at Dukuza Primary School in Bergville under Okhahlamba local municipality. Learners who were recipients of school uniforms could not hide their excitement.

The Speaker said government has prioritized education, which means all of us at a different level in governance have to do the same. "As part of our social responsibility programme, we decided to hand over these uniforms. Through this initiative we have already benefited hundreds of pupils in different parts of KwaZulu-Natal. We are providing uniforms because we know that some families face serious financial hardships which make them unable to support their children. In turn, this leads to absenteeism and even dropping out", said Ms Boyce.



Stakeholders with beneficiaries of the programme

She then reminded all learners that their background should not determine who they are or what they want to achieve in life. The Speaker also said that "history has taught us that it is through giving that we enrich and prolong both our own lives and the lives of others". This event was part of the Legislature's social responsibility programme which has touched the lives of many people across the province.

By midday Uthukela District leadership led by the Honourable Mayor Cllr Mazibuko went to monitor the project at Mnweni package plant. This project will help to supply community in the area with water as they are facing challenges and they rely on boreholes and water tankers to get water. The team met with Sydwal Construction who briefed them about the progress made so far. As the old saying goes like seeing is believing, the team was satisfied with what they have seen on the ground.

Official closing ceremony of 16 Days of Activism

For the past few years the 16 Days of Activism Against Women and Children Abuse has marked activities around the world to end gender based violence. The campaign has been used to raise awareness to address issues of safety and protection of survivors of violence and to call for the elimination of all forms of gender violence. The South African Police Service (SAPS) and stakeholders gathered at the Indoor Sports Centre to officially close the campaign. Stakeholders included Uthukela District Mayor Cllr AS Mazibuko, Alfred Duma Mayor Cllr MV Madlala, Community Policing Forum, Business Against Crime, Sumitomo Rubber, Al Imdaad Foundation, Gift of the Givers, Wise Training and officials.

In his welcoming remarks Mayor Madlala said that it is our duty to take care of our people. He told the audience that in the midst of violence that is happening in our society we need to take a stance. "We have heard of one men in another province who killed his wife and children. We must work together to prevent this from happening. We must make sure that we don't abuse women, children, elders and everyone in our homes and communities", said Mayor Madlala. He referred to the incident which happened in another school where a learner was bullying other learner and said that is totally unacceptable. He then urged all men to heed the call to protect the vulnerable people.

One survivor of gender violence Mr Sakhile Xaba came to the fore and mentioned that men are also victims of gender-based violence but the problem is that most men are taught not to raise the alarm. He encouraged men to come forward and share their experiences in order to get help. Mr Xaba also called upon all men to protect women and children from abuse. He then encouraged them to go to the clinics to check their status in order to live a good life.

Delivering her keynote address, Deputy Provincial Commissioner Gen Radebe said violence perpetrated against women and children must be dealt with. She was concerned that 22 year on but we are still counted as one of the leading countries in the world. "It is not a shame to speak out against abuse. In the midst of COVID-19 pandemic violence against vulnerable group persists. We will deal decisively with perpetrators of crime and gender violence. We have a spate of women being killed by the hands of their lovers. There's little room for failure to the police", Gen Radebe alluded. Government has committed to fighting the scourge of gender violence. She urged people not to take law in their own hands but to report to the police.



Stakeholders doing candle light at the event

In closing, Mayor Mazibuko remarked that without the police being there the issues of crime cannot be resolved but again without the community being involved the police cannot resolve crime. "In order to be able to fight gender violence we also need community involvement. There are many form of abuse, it is not only involving physical abuse. Violence against women and children will never end until men stand up. We need to focus on young men to eliminate the abuse", commented the Mayor. He also said people out there are dying of COVID-19 pandemic because they are not adhering to the regulations. He encouraged them to avoid crowded places, wear a mask, sensitize or wash hands.

School receives new sanitation facilities

Learners and educators of Bhokintuthuko High School will now have peace of mind knowing that their lives are not in danger after the school received new toilets. These toilets were handed over to the school during the event that was organized in Mokitsheni area by the Gift of the Givers, Sumitomo Rubber, Education department, Uthukela District and Alfred Duma municipalities. Six VIP toilets were officially donated by Gift of the Givers Foundation and Sumitomo Rubber to the school.

Speaking at the event Mr Jaaved Khan from the Gift of the Givers mentioned the challenges faced by the country in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic and other social issues. "COVID-19 has caused problems not only to students and people in the country but also around the world. But still we are moving on. Today we are here to hand over the toilets in partnership with Sumitomo Rubber. Without them this programme would not be possible", said Mr Khan.

Mr Khan pleaded with the learners to look after the property well so that the future generations will also benefit from the programme. These words were reiterated by Mr Daniel Libisi from Sumitomo Rubber during his remarks. "We are very humbled to be part of the programme. The school itself has been very close to our heart hence we are partners for this", he said.

The Education department was grateful for the programme saying this will greatly needed by the school. "This is an important day for the school as it is receiving the toilets from our social partners. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic that has gripped the world, water and sanitation become even more important to everyone as a human being than ever. Please take care of them and make good use of them. We also thank Gift of the Givers for everything that you are doing for us. Sumitomo Rubber is one of the biggest employer in town so they are a very important stakeholder with their social responsibility programmes", said Mr Mazibuko.

Cllr S Dlungwane who represented Uthukela District Mayor appreciated the work done by social partners. "We are here to witness and congratulate the school for receiving the toilet infrastructure from our social partners Gift of the Givers and Sumitomo Rubber. What you are doing will go a long way to improve the lives of our communities. There are so many challenges faced by our schools so whatever you have, please always assist us. These toilets are for you, the learners and it's up to you to look well after them. The struggle for freedom aimed to set you free in order to be able to do things for yourselves. But school is where it all starts", concluded Cllr Dlungwane.

He acknowledged the school as one of the best performing schools in the district. He also motivated learners to have a purpose in life. The Principal Mr Madonsela thanked all the stakeholders on behalf of the school. He also said they will keep on knocking on the doors asking for more and that stakeholders should not get tired of them.



Handover event of toilet facilities by social partners

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Uthukela District Municipality
33 Forbes Street/ 36 Lyell Street
Ladysmith 3370
Tel: 036 638 5100
Call Centre: 086 010 4257
Anti-Fraud Hotline: 0800 033 660

