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Media Statement

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MINISTER HLABISA HOSTS UTHUKELA SERVICE DELIVERY AND GOVERNANCE ROUNDTABLE TO UNBLOCK BOTTLENECKS

Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), Mr Velenkosini Hlabisa, led the uThukela Service Delivery and Governance Roundtable in Dongala Boutique, Ladysmith. The Minister was joined by KZN CoGTA MEC Rev. Thulasizwe Buthelezi together with local leadership, business fraternity, and social partners to address municipal performance and service delivery across the district.

This was the continuation of the work that was started by Minister Hlabisa to address many challenges in the district including water provision challenges. He therefore came to listen to the proposed solutions and also weigh in on how best these challenges can be resolved. Since August 2024 the Minister has been here, specifically, at Ekuvukeni to ensure that the basic human rights, which are water and sanitation, are being taken care of.

He was also here to harness practical insights from the business sector to shape a modern, fit-for-purpose local government system. A high-level panel discussion focusing on “Enhancing Basic Service Provision for Businesses to Thrive: Experiences and Lessons” was set up. It brought together representatives from government, business, development institutions and civil society. The panel discussed the critical role of reliable basic services in supporting economic growth and creating an enabling environment for businesses.

The discussion highlighted the effective and sustainable provision of essential services such as water, sanitation, electricity, roads and other critical infrastructure. This is fundamental to attracting investment, supporting existing businesses and stimulating local economic development. Small and emerging businesses are particularly vulnerable to unreliable services, as disruptions to water, electricity and road infrastructure can significantly increase operating costs and affect their ability to remain sustainable.

In terms of financial sustainability, the panel said they aim to explore innovative ways and paradigms to accelerate service delivery through growth and development in the UThukela District. Water provision challenges emerged as one of the most critical concerns during the discussion. Panellists highlighted both the reliability of water supply and water quality as important factors influencing business operations.

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This reinforces the need for municipalities to prioritise investment in water infrastructure, preventative maintenance and sustainable water-resource management. Municipal billing was also identified as an area requiring attention. Accurate, transparent and efficient billing systems are therefore essential for strengthening confidence. It was said that none revenue water is a complex matter which must be dealt with. One cannot beat the none revenue water if the assets are unknown.

Minister Hlabisa reflected on the need to reposition municipalities as economic enablers through a differentiated funding regime, overseen by a competent and accountable leadership. "Communities expect tangible improvements, not promises," said Minister Hlabisa. He also announced that they held a meeting on Tuesday where it was resolved that uThukela District Municipality will receive provincial water tankers as part of an emergency intervention aimed at easing ongoing water supply challenges across the district.

The Minister then announced the Steering Committee to restore reliable water supply across the length and breadth of UThukela District Municipality. The Committee will coordinate implementation, monitor progress and manage risk, and will set up a recovery tracker to monitor infrastructure projects, maintenance and complaint resolution. The first progress report is expected to be tabled at the end of August 2026, with monthly updates to follow.

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Minister of Cogta
Mr V Hlabisa



UThukela Municipal Manger
Mr LS Jili



UThukela Speaker
Cllr TY Nqubuka



Alfred Duma MM
Ms SS Ngiba



From left to right: ILM Mayor Cllr M Myeza, roundtable discussion between Minister and business and the audience who was in attendance