**MEDIA BRIEFING STATEMENT BY THE PREMIER OF KWAZULU-NATAL NOMUSA DUBE-NCUBE GIVING AN UPDATE ON THE REBUILDING EFFORTS FOLLOWING THE FLOOD DISASTERS ON THURSDAY, 17 NOVEMBER 2022**

**Honourable MEC for Public Works and Human Settlements; Dr Ntuthuko Mahlaba;**

**Members of the Media;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

Good Morning!

We welcome you all to this media briefing, which is part of our ongoing efforts to keep the people of KwaZulu-Natal informed regarding the rebuilding and recovery of our province since the April and May 2022 flood disasters.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA**

Before we proceed, we wish to start by recognising that today is an important day as the President of the Republic of South Africa His Excellency Cyril Ramaphosa turns 70.

On behalf of the government and people of KwaZulu-Natal, we join the millions of our citizens in sending our hearty congratulations to President Ramaphosa on reaching this major milestone in his life.

**PURPOSE OF THE BRIEFING**

Today, we have convened this media briefing to give an update on the progress made on the interventions to assist communities and families that were affected by the flood disasters of April and May 2022.

Our presentation will cover a number of areas starting with the restoration of services, followed by the rehousing programme and economic recovery.

The floods caused extensive damage to infrastructure and disrupted a number of services in many areas. In the past seven months, our teams have been hard at work led by various MECs to restore services and lead our Build Back Better Programme.

**RESTORATION OF ELECTRICITY**

We wish to report that huge progress has been made in restoring most services. You will recall that the majority of areas had electricity cut offs after the flood disasters. We wish to report that all areas where power was disconnected have all since been restored and are 100% back to normal.

**PROGRESS ON WATER SUPPLY RESTORATION**

We are pleased to report that most of the water services have been restored since the flood disasters. Teams continue to work tirelessly to rebuild the water schemes that were completely washed away.

The restoration of the uThongathi Water Treatment Works was completed on the 27th of October 2022 and water has been restored in most parts of uThongathi and surrounding affected areas. In some areas there are still water bursts being attended to before full restoration is realised. However, we have reached stability level in our water supply. The damage to the Umlazi Canal Pipeline which affected water supply in many parts of the Southern Region was restored and water is stabilising in the southern areas.

**REPAIR TO SANITATION WORKS**

With regard to sanitation, we are reporting progress in the repair work to all sanitation infrastructure. Work is at an advanced stage at the Ohlange Sewerage Pump Station which is the station that impacted the northern beaches. Work is also under way at the Northern Wastewater Treatment Works which is the facility that was impacting the central beaches. Contractors are also hard at work repairing sanitation infrastructure in other parts of the eThekwini Metro.

We are working as quickly as we can to ensure that as we approach the festive season our visitors are able to enjoy themselves at all our beaches. The target is to have all beaches opened by the end of November 2022. There are beaches that are already open, and they are: Point, uShaka, Addington, South, Wedge, North, Bay of Plenty, Battery, Country Club, Brighton, Reunion, Pipeline, Toti Main, Warner, and uMgababa beaches.

In addition, the following swimming pools are open: Rainham, Durban North, Pipeline, Tiger Rocks, Anstey's, Westville, and the Kings Park complex both indoor and outdoor.

**PROGRESS ON HUMAN SETTLEMENT INTERVENTIONS**

Ladies and Gentlemen, we wish to report that we have made visible progress in moving flood victims out of Mass-Care Centres into dignified accommodation.

In the aftermath of the April and May floods, the National Department of Human Settlements granted a total amount of R325,764 million from the Provincial Emergency Housing Grant for the provision of Emergency Housing solutions which included Temporary Residential Units (TRUs).

Among the Human Settlement Remedies implemented are Transitional Emergency Accommodation, provision of Temporary Residential Units, Building Material Supply, Permanent Housing and Rental Assistance Schemes.

The construction of TRUs was identified as an immediate emergency to house the more than 4000 displaced flood victims. Some victims had their houses partially damaged which necessitated that intervention in the form of Building Material Supply Vouchers be provided.

Of the identified buildable 1810 TRUs during the First Phase, 1592 have been completed with 1511 being occupied. The other 81 completed will be occupied in KwaDukuza Municipality as soon as services are installed.  We anticipate that by the end of this week the services would have been installed resulting in the closing down of four mass care centres of the existing eight in KwaDukuza.

The remaining four would be shut down by month end thus completing the total shutdown of all Mass-Care Centres in KwaDukuza.

Of the original **135** Mass-Care Centres that were set up in the aftermath of the disaster about 71 have since been closed and moves are afoot to decant floods victims in the remaining 64 Mass-Care Centres. Daily we are closing these mass-care centres and are moving people into temporary emergency units. The recent examples are the closure of Thandanani in KwaDukuza, the Shembe, 38Avenue and Nondlini in the eThekwini Metro.

Furthermore, in eThekwini Metro, which was the epicentre of the flood disasters, about 50 Mass-Care Centres remain. There is progress in linking Mass-Care Centres and Transitional Emergency Accommodation facilities as well as permanent housing solutions land parcels in an integrated manner.

The Provincial Government working with the City and the Human Settlements public entity the Housing Development Agency, have secured eight land parcels which will be used for permanent housing solutions in the Western, Northern and Southern regions.

To date more **than R98 million has** been spent in the first tranche of the **allocated R325 million,** and 206 families have since been relocated to decent Temporary Emergency Accommodation facilities as at the beginning of this week.

**PROGRESS WITH THE PROVINCIAL ROADS REHABILITATION**

The Province suffered road infrastructure damages as a result of the floods amounting to R5,7 billion. This translates to 1372 flood damaged projects. The damaged experienced ranged from pipe culvert damages, wash aways and even damages to bridge structures.

The short-term interventions included the use of internal teams to attend to road closures, tree clearance and blading. Vukayibambe Routine Road Maintenance (VRRM) teams were also used to clear debris on roads. Operation Siyazenzela is also being utilised to rehabilitate flood damage gravel roads in towns and villages within the Province. However due to the extent of the damages to the road network, some projects were outsourced to fast-track implementation and service delivery.

An amount totalling R2.9 billion was made available to attend to flood damage in all affected districts within the Province. At least 730 projects were prioritised based on the proximity to schools, clinics and hospitals. Several of these outsourced projects have been handed over.

To date more than 80% of the roads allocated for the rehabilitation by Operation Siyazenzela have been completed. The Departmental yellow plant is still at work at various locations within the Province to restore and improve roads in an effective manner.

The Department of Transport in partnership with SANRAL managed to open strategic routes such as the e R102 and M4 using temporary measures. The agreement between the two entities includes the development of a permanent solution which is currently underway.

Through an existing Memorandum of Agreement between the KZN Department of Transport and the National Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (NDPWI), the Welisisizwe Rural Bridges programme (Bailey bridges programme) will be implemented on 23 locations in the province to provide access in the current financial year.

**UPDATE ON FLOOD DAMAGED SCHOOLS**

Of the total 356 schools that were damaged by the floods 46 have been completed, 123 are at construction stage, and 187 are undergoing procurement. A total 76 mobile classrooms have been installed in 29 schools in the province.

Those under construction will be completed before the end of February 2023. Sites for 157 of the 187 schools are anticipated to be handed over before the end of November 2022. The balance of the 20 of the 187 schools will be under construction within the first quarter of the 2023/24 financial year.

The construction of these projects was delayed by the requirement of the Real Time Audit by the Provincial Treasury.

**PROGRESS ON SCHOOLS BEING REPAIRED BY DONORS**

Tsogo Sun has pledged to rehabilitate schools to the value of R3million and has already transferred the R3 million into the Departmental Budget.

For schools under **COEGA** the implementing agent, contractors are being finalised by 25 November 2022 with repairs being completed end of March 2023.

The schools are Ongane Combined School (Zululand), Lukhasa Secondary School(iLembe), Amandlakhe Secondary School(uMgungundlovu) and Emngangeni Secondary School(uGu).

For the schools under **Sasol** the site hand over was conducted on 04 October 2022 and will be completed by 31December 2022. These schools are Mlinganiswa Primary(uGu), Umnini Memorial Primary (Umlazi), Sidiya Junior Primary (Umlazi), Sicelimpilo Primary (Umlazi), Ndabikhona Primary(uMgungundlovu) and Kwamlamuli Primary(uMgungundlovu).

**The Same Foundation** has completed the rehabilitation of repairs at Isikhwelo Primary School. The other project at Sandakahle Secondary School (Umlazi) is currently under construction with anticipated completion being 31 December 2022. **Momentum** has already implemented the following projects: Kwazamokuhle Primary School (uGu) and Christeaninburg Primary School (Umlazi).

**THE UPDATE ON HEALTH**

Health Facilities like Prince Mshiyeni Memorial Hospital, Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Hospital, uThongathi, Inanda C, Wentworth and Osindisweni were provided with water tankers. However, most health services have been restored in all affected areas and health care facilities are fully operational.

In total, 82 (eighty-two) facilities were affected to varying degrees ranging from limited roof leakages to extensive structural damages. The cost of repairs is estimated to be about R 280million.

Seventy (70) of these are being repaired and/or renovated through the Department of Public Works, whilst the remaining 12 (twelve) are being repaired and/or renovated by the KZN Department of Health.

**MISSING PEOPLE**

There are still 72 missing people. DNA services are being rendered with the support of the South African Police Service and recently 8 DNA results came positive results. We are aware that some families are seeking closure and may want to have their relatives declared or presumed dead. We will assist all the families seeking to take this route, which is led by the Justice Cluster taking into consideration all the sensitivities and emotional issues around such a step.

**In conclusion,** the province of KwaZulu-Natal has through these recent challenges demonstrated its resilience and fortitude. In the hour of need the flood victims were not alone, their caring government was with them, we wish to give assurance that we will continue to work until we have overcome this crisis. We have made significant progress, but we want to reach a stage of permanent stability for all those affected by floods. Following that night of darkness in April and May, the light is beginning to shine again and there will be a better tomorrow.

 Together we will rise again and Together Let us continue to Build KwaZulu-Natal.