Media Release

Date: 15 January 2008

Statement on the Executive Council Meeting Held on 14 January 2008

The Executive Council (EXCO) had its first meeting in 2009 in Bhisho on 14 January 2009.

The Executive Council noted with concern the taxi strike taking place in Nelson Mandela Bay and supports the approach of putting together a stakeholder engagement process to address the situation and create better understanding of the Rapid Bus Transit System. The Rapid Bus Transit System to be implemented in Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality was approved by national government in 2007. Consultation process was conducted with all the six metros in the country including Nelson Mandela Metro. The aim of the programme is to upgrade the current bus and minibus taxi services to Rapid Bus Transit to be fully integrated to form a single public transport system. The new public transport system in Nelson Mandela Bay is aimed at ensuring that the public transport system will be able to respond to its crucial role in the successful hosting of the 2010 Soccer World Cup. However government wishes to emphasise that the programme is intended for the Metros and big cities. Provincial government sympathises with all the commuters inconvenienced by the situation.
The Executive Council also assessed and was satisfied with provincial government’s readiness for schools re-opening next Wednesday 21 January 2009. The Executive Council will be visiting schools as part of the schools opening programme.

Government continues to implement its Learner Attainment Improvement Strategy (LAIS), whose priority areas will impact positively to learner performance. The LAIS Action plan for 2009 was tabled during this meeting. The focus of the plan amongst other things includes:

1. **On site school support** - School visiting plan is in place and teams which are led by all MECs inclusive of Portfolio Committee Members and Youth Commission have been established to commence the visits as at the first day of school. The focus of the school visits will be on ensuring that effective learning and teaching is taking place, and the media will be invited to join the teams.

2. **Basic School Functionality and Management** - 240 Education development Officers (EDOs) have been identified for training on coaching and mentoring. About 2490 Principals from under performing schools will be trained on management and administration by end of February 2009. Also a plan to implement performance Management for Principals is in place.

3. **Learner Support Programme** - Extra tuition plan has been finalised and will commence in February. Training of Representative Council of Learners (RCLs) has been already done.

4. **Infrastructure** - The Eastern Cape government is committed in eradicating mud school structures and the programme is being implemented as priority. More than 2000 school infrastructure projects are being implemented with water and sanitation, school safety and classroom provisioning as priority. Currently 80 school hostels are being assessed for renovation and refurbishment.
The government continues with the fight against poverty with the introduction of the Social Relief of Distress programme. An outreach programme has been designed and aligned to the Social Relief programme. The Executive Council will pay special attention to the areas that have not been visited before:

**Cacadu** : Steytlerville, Aberdeen, and Willowmore

**Nelson Mandela Metro** : Soweto on Sea, Missionvalle and Uitenhage

**Chris Hani** : Sada, Hewu and Indwe

**Amathole** : Ginsberg, Ndevana and Centane

**Ukhahlamba** : Jamestown, Maclear and Rhodes

**Alfred Nzo** : Matatiele, Mount Frere, Maluti

**OR TAMBO** : Ntabankulu, Ngangelizwe, Libode, Mqanduli

Families will be identified and profiled for further government support and interventions which will ensure that in the long run relevant beneficiaries are able to access social security grants and other relevant support services. This programme is coordinated jointly by SASSA, Office of The Premier and Department of Social Development.

The Social Relief of Distress Programme is a temporary intervention programme which will last only for a period of 3 months from January to March 2009 whilst beneficiaries are assisted to access social services on a permanent basis.

Department of Social Development and SASSA together with stakeholders such as Traditional Leaders, Faith Based Organisations, Departments of Health and Education will identify priority beneficiary communities. Each affected government department will be allocated a portion of the funds and will reflect on achievements at the end of the 3 months in March 2009.
Announcements:

- The next Executive Council meeting of the 28 January 2009 will amongst others review progress to date with the implementation of the provincial turnaround plan targeting the departments of Housing, Education, Health and Local Government & Traditional Affairs.
- The Provincial EXCO Lekgotla is confirmed for 3 and 4 February 2009.
- The State of the Province Address (SOPA) is confirmed for 13 February 2009.

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