

Gauteng wants single-tier local govt system

JOHANNESBURG: The Department of Local Government and Housing in Gauteng has made a submission to the Municipal Demarcation Board (MDB) for the establishment of a single-tier system of local government in the province.

By [Nthambeleni Gabara](#) 14 Nov 2012

This announcement was made by Local Government and Housing MEC Ntombi Mekgwe on Tuesday, 13 November 2012, while briefing reporters about the progress made by municipalities in improving service delivery and challenges across the province.

"As the department, with the backing of the provincial cabinet and the largest portion of municipal councils in the province we've made a submission to the Municipal Demarcation Board for the establishment of the single-tier system of local government in the province," she said.

According to the MEC, the main aim of the single-tier form of government is to ensure the establishment of wall-to-wall metropolitan municipalities across the province, especially aimed at addressing some of the key challenges posed by a two-tier system of local government. A single-tier local government system would see to the effective integration of municipalities which would ultimately lead to better and enhanced service delivery to residents.

She said in terms of the MDB timelines, this process is due to be finalised around the latter part of the 2013 calendar year early in 2014.

Mekgwe said good progress had been reported in creating access to sanitation, electricity and water connections, adding that they will be introducing the clean audit campaign in all the municipalities across the province in the next financial year.

The MEC said the cost of free basic services continued to threaten municipal financial viability. She said the growth in informal settlements and the spate of service delivery protests affected the stability of local government.

The period after the 2011 local government elections had seen a rise not only in the number of protests but violent ones in nature, with Gauteng being the worst affected in the country.

"Despite all these challenges, our work continues to touch all ordinary people. The provision of basic services to all citizens is a clear contribution to the human rights of our people.

"Our commitment and resolve to improving the lives of our people for the better will ensure that more people receive access to government services on a daily basis," said Mekgwe.

The department initiated a project to develop service delivery norms and standards for the provincial municipalities based on any existing sets used by municipalities within the province.

The proposed norms and standards will focus on service delivery levels and the quantity aspects in portable water, sanitation, electricity, solid waste management, roads and storm water, municipal planning and traffic.

With regard to illegal land invasions, the MEC said: "We want to call upon our communities to be vigilant when they buy property, especially land. They must first check with the Deeds Register if such people who are selling the land are not bogus land owners.

"Land invasion makes our work very difficult. People must know that when they invade land illegally, there will be consequences ... We are going to be acting quickly where illegal land invasion happens..." said Mekgwe.

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