

MEDIA STATEMENT

23 JANUARY 2020

STATE OF READINESS FOR THE PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS ON DRAFT ELECTORAL WARDS IN PREPARATION FOR THE 2021 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Members of the Board, our esteemed stakeholders present namely the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), The National House of Traditional Leaders (NHTL), Independent Electoral Council (IEC) and the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) The CEO of Municipal Demarcation Board (MDB), Members of the media, ladies and gentlemen, I wish to take this opportunity to welcome you to this significant gathering in the calendar of the Municipal Demarcation Board.

I am truly humbled by your presence.

His Excellency, President Cyril Ramaphosa has put a strong emphasis on **SERVICE DELIVERY** as the core element that needs to be prioritised. We are more than ever propelled to strengthen our efforts towards ensuring Municipalities deliver on their responsibilities. In this day and age of our democracy, the communities we serve deserve to receive adequate service delivery. There is no excuse about that.

We rally behind the District Development Model which aims to accelerate, align and integrate service delivery under a single development plan per district or metro area. This model will amongst others drive integration at all spheres of government. This will lead to improved service delivery, our communities will have improved living

conditions, employment opportunities, better education, and improved health care and reside in safe places. Ladies and Gentlemen, this is the South Africa we envisioned.

We are pleased to report that, the MDB will embark on a nation-wide public consultations on the draft sets of electoral wards in preparation of the 2021 local government elections. The consultation sessions will commence from February to April 2020. This reflects our relentless commitment to improve our public participation processes in the interest of harnessing and deepening democratic participation. We therefore call on all members of the public to actively participate and express their views on how their wards should be configured.

As one of the core mandates of the organisation, the ward delimitation process is regarded as a crucial step towards deepening local democracy and promoting spatial transformation within communities. This has been the core element driving the organisation for the past 21 years of its existence.

The MDB delimits wards for the purpose of local elections after consultations with the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). Wards are delimited in all metropolitan and local municipalities. This process is deemed necessary to lay a solid foundation for the delivery of free and fair local government elections (LGE).

The process followed after the consultation with the IEC, is sequenced as follows: (i) the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) publishes the formulae for determining the number of councillors for different categories of municipalities, (ii) the MECs responsible for local government use the formulae to determine and publish the number of councillors for respective municipalities in particular provinces, (iii) MDB calculates the number of wards by dividing the published number of Councillors by two and further calculate the norm that defines a ward for each municipality. The norm being the average number of registered voters allowed in each ward in a particular municipality. The norm is obtained by dividing the total number of registered voters in that municipality by the total number of wards.

It should be noted that during the 2016 local government elections there were 4392 wards in the country, and there are an additional 76 wards bringing the total number of wards to 4468 for the 2021 local government elections.

The process has culminated in the conclusion of the first draft sets of wards leading us to the current phase where we will visit all local and metropolitan municipalities in all nine Provinces starting with Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga, KwaZulu Natal and Western Cape in February. In March we will be in Gauteng and conclude in Northern Cape, Free State, North West and Limpopo in April 2020.

When we announce the final wards in July 2020, we should have the comfort of knowing that the process was transparent and decisions taken have, as far as possible, embraced inputs from our stakeholders and communities.

Remember, the MDB has the responsibility to ensure that the public and all its stakeholders understand and are involved in this process until wards are officially handed over to the IEC in August 2020.

It is important to also note that, the MDB has no influence in the determination of the formulae and the number of Councillors in a municipality and therefore cannot increase or reduce the number of Councillors determined by MECs. The MDB appeals to stakeholders not to make representations to the MDB to change the formulae, increase or decrease the number of Councillors or the number of wards.

ROADMAP OF THE WARD DELIMITATION PROCESS

With regards to the timeframes of the ward delimitation process, after the public meetings in February to April 2020, the MDB will consider all public proposals received and delimit wards. The wards will be published in provincial gazettes for objections by May 2020. Any aggrieved person will have 14 days to object.

The MDB will then consider all objections, and publish its final decisions in provincial gazettes by July 2020. As indicated previously, the MDB will then handover the final ward boundaries to the IEC in August 2020 to start preparing for the 2021 local elections.

OUTER BOUNDARY REDETERMINATION PROCESS

We are mindful of concerning and sensitive issues which has manifested through a number of community protests, complaints and litigations against the decisions of the Board over the last few years.

In 2018, the MDB concluded the municipal boundary re-determination process. The period between 2019 and 2021 the MDB will not conduct any municipal boundary re-determinations until after the 2021 local Government elections. That will allow the MDB time to delimit wards and the IEC to prepare for those elections.

Accordingly, the review of municipal ward boundaries needs to be completed on time prior to the local government elections, to allow sufficient time for the IEC to make necessary preparations for the elections.

We have also made an appeal that pending the outer boundary re-determination in 2021, Municipal Leadership and Community Leaders should assist by ensuring that services are rendered to the communities within the context of the current municipal boundaries.

In relation to the outer-boundary redetermination concerns, the following Provinces, among others, were identified as areas that require attention: Limpopo, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu Natal and North West.

Despite being identified as areas of concern, we still encourage and plead with the communities of these areas to cooperate with us and be part of the public consultations relating to the ward delimitation process.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

We are grateful for the support provided by Municipalities and are eager to deliver wards that reflect as far as possible, the consensus of our communities. Our aim is to deepen democracy through spatial transformation. We therefore need to work together

to take local government to greater heights, I have no doubt in my mind that, the best way to effect meaningful change is through proper consultations and collaborations. On that note, I appeal to all citizens to exercise their democratic rights responsibly and assist us in building a South Africa we can all be proud of.

In conclusion, this process will not only assist us to solicit public inputs from communities but will deepen the public's interest and understanding of demarcation processes. We therefore seek your support as members of the media to impart information of this important campaign to communities across the country.

More information on the ward delimitation process is available on our website www.demarcation.org.za. Details about the venues of the meetings will be updated on our MDB media platforms throughout the consultation period.

I thank you.

-ENDS-

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