



afesis-corplan



PRESS STATEMENT #ASIVIKELANE

VOICES OF INFORMAL SETTLEMENT RESIDENTS DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

BASIC SERVICE PROVISION FOR INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS DETERIORATE

24 February 2021

Dear Media Partner

Water, sanitation and refuse removal services in informal settlements have deteriorated all over the country in the last few months. As national Covid-19 relief funding to metros has run out and metros' own revenue has declined, they have started reducing services to informal settlements.

Contracts for filling water tanks have been allowed to expire, **the regularity of toilet cleaning has been reduced and maintenance teams have been reduced in size.**

Communal taps and toilets in informal settlements are used by many people and need regular maintenance. **Over 75% of residents surveyed this month report that it takes longer than a month for government to fix broken taps and toilets.** And in local municipalities the situation is even worse. Residents often give up on government and use their own money to fix taps and toilets. One resident's comment summarises an all-too-common experience: "They take more than 3-6 months to fix or never fix it at all. Sometimes the community members fix problems themselves."

Today Minister Mboweni tables the national budget and metros and local municipalities will table their budgets by the end of March. There can be no doubt that metros need further national support to resume and extend some of these services. But **there are things that municipalities can and should do themselves to improve this situation.** Now is not the time for budget games between national and metro governments.

What municipalities can do to improve informal settlement services without breaking the bank:



- Increase and ring-fence funding in the overall maintenance budget for repairing informal settlement taps and toilets.
- Increase and ring-fence the informal settlement share of refuse removal budgets.
- Shift funding from large upgrading projects to large scale incremental basic services provision.
- Publish more detailed spending plans and service norms for informal settlements to enable the public and oversight actors to participate meaningfully in the local government budget process.

Detailed results and comments from residents are available at www.asivikelane.org.za

Asivikelane receives responses from 849 residents from 211 settlements in the following municipalities **City of Johannesburg, City of Ekurhuleni, Buffalo City Metro, City of eThekweni, City of Cape Town, Nelson Mandela Bay, Mossel Bay, Witzenberg, Knysna, Umsunduzi, Emfuleni, Cederberg and eMalahleni** - by answering four access to basic services questions in a survey format:

- Was there enough water for all residents in your settlement, in the last 7 days?
- Did the municipality clean your toilet in the last 7 days?
- Was waste collected in your settlement in the last seven days?
- When a tap or toilet breaks in your settlement, how quickly does the municipality fix it?

Asivikelane is a campaign initiated by partners International Budget Partnership-South Africa (IBP-SA), Planact, Afesis-corplan, South Africa SDI Alliance, Development Action Group (DAG), Social Justice Coalition (SJC), 1to1, Grassroot, Luthando OVC, Letsema La Sechaba and other organizations whose aim it is to help informal settlement residents to monitor the delivery of services themselves and begin a dialogue with government to ensure scarce public money goes to those who need it most, and is spent efficiently.

END

For interviews please do not hesitate to call our ...

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