No time for budget games

24 FEBRUARY 2021: ASIVIKELANE 14 reports that water, sanitation and refuse removal services in informal settlements have deteriorated all over the country in the last few months, with not a single green light for metro service delivery. As national COVID-19 relief funding to metros has run out and metros' own revenues have 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 decreased and maintenance teams have been reduced in size.

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 metros can and should do themselves to improve this situation. Now is not the time for budget games between national and metro governments.

What metros 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.

COMMUNAL TAPS AND TOILETS IN INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS ARE NEVER FIXED

Residents clean their own toilets with materials provided by the government. 849 residents from 211 settlements responded over the last week. Residents from the Mangaung Metro Municipality have also started to participate in Asivikelane. Detailed results and comments from residents themselves are available at: www.asivikelane.org.za

DATA NOTES: The results reflecting how fast a municipality responds when a tap or toilet breaks excludes the answers of residents who indicated that they do not have access to municipal-provided taps and toilets. Knysna and Mossel Bay’s traffic lights for toilet cleaning/draining are greyed out because residents clean their own toilets with materials provided by the government. 849 residents from 211 settlements responded over the last week. Residents from the Mangaung Metro Municipality have also started to participate in Asivikelane. Detailed results and comments from residents themselves are available at: www.asivikelane.org.za

For more information contact: infosa@internationalbudget.org  twitter: @ibp_sa  facebook: internationalbudgetpartnershipsouthafrica  We are delighted to welcome Letsema La Sechaba Community Shield Foodbank and Luthando OVC Care Centre to Asivikelane.

GOVERNMENT NEVER FIXES OUR TAPS AND TOILETS

How quickly does the municipality fix broken taps or toilets?

METRO

Non-Metro

Week 22% 14%
Month 28% 12%
Never 49% 74%

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