

**SPEECH BY MEC FOR PWRT, HON. DG. NHLENGETHWA DURING
THE PROVINCIAL BY-LAWS SUMMIT IN STEVE TSHWETE LOCAL
MUNICIPALITY**

DATE: 29 OCTOBER 2014

PROGRAMME DIRECTOR,

**HONOURABLE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF THE HOST DISTRICT
MUNICIPALITY, CLLR T NGWENYA**

**HONOURABLE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF THE HOST LOCAL
MUNICIPALITY, CLLR M MASINA**

HONOURABLE EXECUTIVE MAYORS

ESTEEMED COUNCILLORS

THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT FOR COGTA, MR CM CHUNDA

**SENIOR OFFICIALS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COGTA AND THE
MUNICIPALITIES**

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

- 1 Programme Director, the transformation of local government is top on the agenda of the ANC-led Administration. Recently, the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, under the sterling leadership of Hon. Minister Pravin Gordhan, introduced the back-to-the basics approach, aimed at improving the performance of local government in the country.
- 2 We move from the premise that municipalities are the first point of contact for our communities. The President, His Excellency J.G Zuma has charged us with the responsibility to improve local government. To put it in his own words, he said: ***“We must improve local government so that our people may have a good experience when dealing with municipalities”.***

3 When introducing the back-to-the-basics approach for municipalities, Minister Gordhan cited the following as building blocks. These are:

- **Good Governance,**
- **Public participation**
- **Financial Management**
- **Infrastructure Services**
- **Institutional Capacity.**

4 Today, Programme Director as we converge in this summit on by-laws, our discussions and deliberations should be informed by what the back-to-the-basics approach seeks to achieve.

5 Local Government has always been undergoing transformation since 1999. Several interventions have been introduced as part of the transformation process. Minister Gordhan's approach comes in the backdrop of interventions such as Project Consolidate and the Turn-around Strategy.

6 My observation, Programme Director is that all these interventions have yielded the desired outcomes. The latest 2013 STATS SA report, on municipal service delivery, is a case in point.

7 The report states the following service delivery achievements:

- The number of people with access to water has increased by 3,3 %
- The number of households with electricity has increased by 2,3%
- Waste management has increased by 5,1%
- Sewerage and sanitation by 6,2 %.

- 8 This improvement is attributed to the role of municipalities in the delivery of basic services. Minister Gordhan captured this improvement so well when he said: “***We have made tremendous progress in delivering water, electricity, sanitation and refuse removal at local level. These rates of delivery are unprecedented in world-wide terms***”.
- 9 In our own province, Mpumalanga, the report states that we have increased by 56,3% the number of people with access to water after the Western Cape’s 77,3%.
- 10 As representatives of our municipalities, please take the glory for this remarkable achievement! We await with belated breath the next STATS SA report on the delivery of basic services as we monitor the level of improvement by local government.
- 11 Programme Director, building of a responsive, caring and accountable local government is at the heart of the transformation process under the new Administration, as envisaged by the National Development Plan (NDP). Our desire to transform local government is one thing, and our desire to see local government transformed is another thing.
- 12 Your desire to see local government transformed can be measured by your maximum participation in this summit. The fact that you have cleared your schedules to attend the summit is convincing enough that your desire to see local government transformed. The solutions and innovations you will bring on the table during break away sessions into Commissions, is indeed, a convincing point.

13 However, Programme Director, what you do at the end of the summit will give us a signal that you want to transform local government. I have noted with appreciation challenges in relation to the by-laws:

- Some of our municipalities are grappling with outdated by-laws and old ordinances,
- Some have inadequate capacity for enforcement,
- Some have limited capacity to draft by-laws,
- Some have limited funding to gazette by-laws,
- Some fail to comply with the process to enact the by-laws,
- Some have no translation services for the by-laws,
- Some have no capacity to institute punitive measures against private companies which do not comply with the by-laws which prevent air pollution. For example: Nkomazi, Mbombela, Emalahleni, Steve Tshwete, Govan Mbeki.
- Some municipalities are struggling with the capacity to curb illegal disposal of waste medical material. For example: Inkomazi, Mbombela, Bushbuckridge, Umjindi, Chief Albert Luthuli, Emalahleni, Steve Tshwete, Thaba Chweu and Msukaligwa.

14 This summit is therefore a perfect platform to discuss and deliberate on the solutions to overcome these challenges.

15 As I mention the challenges, Programme Director, the support given to local municipalities by Ehlanzeni District in the drafting of by-laws, cannot go unnoticed. We hope the local municipalities will take advantage of this support to improve. On the same breath, we call upon the two other districts, namely; Nkangala and Gert Sibande to emulate the example set by Ehlanzeni, to provide their local municipalities with a similar support.

16 In conclusion, I wish our Hon. Executive Mayors, our esteemed Councillors, our Municipal Managers and all supporting functionaries of our municipalities success. The success of the summit will be measured against the gazetting and publishing of standard draft by-laws which will enable municipalities to customize, gazette and translate into by-laws into their own areas of jurisdiction.

Together, we take local government forward.

I thank you.