

**ADDRESS BY MEC FOR CO-OPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL
AFFAIRS IN MPUMALANGA, HON. RM. MTSHWENI DURING THE NCOP'S
PLENARY FOR THE 5TH PARLIAMENT, THIRD TERM IN CAPE TOWN
DATE: 18 NOVEMBER 2014**

CHAIRPERSON OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES, HONOURABLE
T.R MODISE

HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF THE NCOP

OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVES FROM PROVINCES PRESENT

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

1. Chairperson, on the 2nd of May this year, South Africa celebrated 20 years of Freedom. This reminded us of an appeal to all of us by the former President, Dr Nelson Mandela in his speech to mark the ANC's landslide victory after the first democratic elections. He remarked: ***"Let us build the future together, and toast a better life for all South Africans"***.
2. The speech punctuated a turning point for South Africa until this day as it set the tone for the young and old, black and white, males and females to work together for a common goal: ***A better life for all***.
3. Madiba delivered his speech in the spirit of the ANC's Freedom Charter, adopted in 1955 in Kliptown, Soweto, in which it was declared: ***"that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people"***.

Vision 2030 toward NDP

4. Chairperson, this august House must be reminded that at the welcoming event of the honourable NCOP members on 8 September 2014 in our province, the Mpumalanga Vision 2030 Implementation Framework was explicitly articulated as a plan to support Governments' Program of Action for the realization of the National Development Plan (NDP), that embraces the following major priorities, namely:
 - Education and Training;
 - Health;
 - Human Settlement and Basic Services;
 - Rural Development, Land Reform and Food Security;

- Creation of more jobs opportunities, decent work and sustainable livelihoods for inclusive growth; and
 - Fighting crime and Corruption.
5. Chairperson, we are working together with our municipalities, to make service delivery work for our people. We are inspired by the fact that municipalities have reprioritized their budgets to be biased towards the delivery of basic services. This reprioritization has found expression in the Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) and Budgets that were adopted for the 2014/15 financial year.
 6. COGTA has also redefined its role for providing support and ensuring that municipalities are capable to execute their developmental role in meeting the Vision of the NDP. The understanding of our role is further enhanced by the actions that need to be taken with our local government in addressing the following key deficiencies:
 - Understanding the root causes of service delivery protests; e.g. Troika issues, weak community relations with municipalities; dysfunctionality, corruption, poor audit outcomes etc.
 7. Chairperson, our ultimate outcome is that by 2030 we must have a developmental local government that is accountable, focused on citizen's priorities and capable of delivering high-quality services consistently and sustainably through cooperative governance and participatory democracy.
 8. In this scenario, local government is at the forefront of participatory democracy involving citizens in meaningful deliberations regarding governance and development. It must be a local government that is responsive to citizens' priorities and enjoys high levels of trust and credibility amongst the public; it is also local government whose employees are skilled, competent and committed to delivering quality services.
 9. Chairperson, we also aspire for a local government that is able to cost-effectively increase the quantity and quality of services and operates within a supportive and empowering intergovernmental system.
 10. Chairperson, with your permission allow me to highlight in brief the plan of action for building a responsive, accountable, effective and efficient government system which is expressed in a form of an Integrated Municipal Support Plan (IMSP) that has been approved by EXCO.

11. The IMSP is already linked to the objects of local government in terms of Section 152 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 and the key focus areas for support derived from these objects are aligned to the Back to Basic Strategy.
- Object 1 deal with a democratic and accountable government for local communities which are linked to the Key Focus Area (KFA) on Good Governance.
 - Object 2: to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner which is linked to KFA on basic services for creating decent living conditions. Examples include the provision of basic services such as water, sanitation, electricity and support for integrated human settlement.
 - Object 3: to promote social and economic development which is linked to KFA on Local Economic Development (LED) and Spatial Planning.
 - Object 4: to promote a safe and healthy environment. Example such as disaster management, improve fire brigade services, improve status of blue and green drop and total eradication of izinyokanyoka (illegal connections)
 - Object 5: to encourage the involvement of communities and community organizations on matters of local government. Key Focus Area for this is public participation where functionality of ward committees and public participation programmes by councilors are of attention.
 - Object 6 is our addition from the Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 as an attempt to secure sound and sustainable management of the fiscal and financial affairs of municipalities. We have also agreed at the Provincial level that this function shall be performed at the level of Provincial Treasury and the outcomes of work done shall be fed both to MEC COGTA and MEC Finance as part of reporting.
 - It is this area of work that shall address the Auditor General's concerns which among others are the following:
 - ❖ Clean and/or improved audit outcomes;
 - ❖ Asset management;
 - ❖ Dealing with high vacancy rate;
 - ❖ Improved Supply Chain Management Processes;
 - ❖ Improved coordination and monitoring between the district and its locals;
 - ❖ Strengthened internal controls and many other details that are clearly mapped in the plan to improve financial viability of municipalities.

We have also acknowledge the three (3) main issues that were mentioned by the AG which are the underlying root causes for the poor audit outcomes in municipalities. These issues have been summarized as:

- Lack of consequences for poor performance and transgressions;
- Slow response by the leadership to address the root causes of poor audit outcomes; and
- Key positions vacant and/or key officials lacking appropriate competencies for the position occupied.

12. Chairperson, the Executive Council has tasked Provincial Treasury and COGTA through the IMSP to take slightly different extraordinary steps that specialized attention is focused using the relevant expertise to attend to all municipalities that are showing deficiencies as stated above.
13. This will include assigning financial experts, exercising the local government regulations specifically Chapter 13 for the appointment of qualified senior managers for the municipalities, taking an extra mile in allocating engineers but most importantly strengthening our monthly monitoring of internal controls, Supply Chain Processes, enforcing appropriate leadership and consequences where poor performance and transgressions have been committed.

Water Provision

14. We are making inroads in the provision of the basic services. Members of the NCOP visited Phola village in the Mbombela Municipality, one of the sites of the 9 steel water tanks commissioned by the Provincial Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs.
15. The two tanks, each with a capacity of 750 000 litres of water. These tanks will supplement the current supply of 1.4 mega litres of water to the estimated population of 4600 households. However, there remains a challenge of ensuring additional delivery capacity from existing waterworks. Pump station including bulk pipelines have been created to keep the storage reservoirs filled on a 24-hour basis.
16. To this end, a Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant (RBIG) project called Nsikazi North Bulk Supply has been identified for funding. The estimated required funding is in excess of R300 million to address the requirements and ensure the effective provision of water.

17. All these water interventions seek to accelerate bulk water supply services; water reticulation and address issues of operations and infrastructure maintenance. Chairperson we must also be reminded that during the briefing of the Executive Mayors and their local municipalities it was evident that this challenge cuts across all our municipalities in the province.
18. It is for that reason that we have drawn in Rand Water to support our municipalities in accelerating the bulk water and sanitation infrastructure provision in all identified villages.
19. Chairperson it must also be recalled that community members raised a number of similar issues related to water needs in other areas during the engagements, some of these issues are aptly captured as follows:
 - That the neighboring wards 8 and 9, respectively, still have no water, despite the new water infrastructure.
 - That the current water supply infrastructure (pipes) has aged and requires urgent repair in order to provide water to the communities.
 - That illegal connection to the water supply network needs to be urgently addressed.
 - There is also a need for the replacement of asbestos pipes that are currently causing huge water leakages and intermittent pipe bursts.
20. We have noted these issues and have already started to address them with the assistance of Rand Water. Specific projects have been identified and approved with budget allocated for that purpose.
21. Let me further indicate that the provincial government, led by CoGTA, will be going ahead with a programme on war on leaks as envisage assistance to municipalities that are currently challenged with high distributions losses and huge leakages.
22. The war on leaks is targeting a few municipalities such as Bushbuckridge, Lekwa and Umjindi that have shown huge distribution losses that have to be immediately curtailed.

Stakeholder engagements

23. Chairperson it must be mentioned that the concern of the NCOP for the non-attendance of Emalahleni, Victor Khanye, Steve Tshwete and Dr J.S Moroka has caught our serious attention.

24. Notwithstanding the fact that all the mentioned municipalities are from the Nkangala District, COGTA has made an arrangement with all Districts municipalities to strengthen their co-ordination role and step up the monitoring within its district jurisdiction. COGTA has also developed mechanisms through the IMSP to enforce IGR engagements and compliance with the attendance of the crucial governmental structures such as the visit by parliament.
25. We are destined to tighten all controls and to improve on the weaknesses as identified by the NCOP to avoid these unnecessary gaps by our municipalities. I have further taken this matter up to feature as a standing item in our MINMECs and PCFs to deal with matters of discipline and our general conduct on governance related matters.

Traditional Leadership Matters

26. Chairperson, we have noted with appreciation the inputs made by the traditional leadership during the NCOP visit. They have raised concern about the inadequate time allocated to them for inputs during the drafting of legislation.
27. We commit ourselves to ensure that their concerns are taken into consideration in all matters of policy formulation as an important layer of leadership, which represents the aspirations of our communities in the rural areas.
28. There are processes in place to improve the participation of Traditional Leaders in Municipal Council in terms of Section 81 of the Municipal Structures Act, 1998 in that the province has gazetted the names of traditional leaders who participate in the proceedings of Municipal Councils. We have further coordinated the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between SALGA, Traditional Leaders, Municipalities and SAPS in order to curb land invasion. We are also looking at expanding support for the Tools of Trade for Traditional Leaders in terms of the National Framework that guides the minimum Tools of Trade to be provided to Traditional Leaders.
29. We must admit that we have been challenged by limited financial resources to provide for all the Tools of Trade at once, however the provision of vehicles and the refurbishment of their offices as well as the construction of palaces for the two kings in the province, are already part of our focused support.

30. Let me reiterate that the Mpumalanga province supports the Government's POA which is based on the 14 National agreed Outcomes that are already worked into the Service Delivery Agreements, the Strategic Plans of departments and their Annual Performance Plans. As such all departments are geared towards the achievement of these Government priorities and to ensure that implementation of such plans emulate the alignment of the NDP and the Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF).
31. It is an undeniable fact that Mpumalanga is the biggest producer of coal for the supply of energy in the country. The coal mines attract hundreds of workers from all corners of the country, and contribute to the high demand of human settlements and basic services. The province is currently embarking on the development of the Integrated Human Settlement Master Plan which is aimed at addressing the current social and economic imbalances that have been caused by inevitable pressures due to high population influx as a result of people seeking better economic and employment opportunities.
32. Consequently, the Executive Council in the Province has resolved to identify 7 municipalities that have characteristics of fast growing towns which are to be supported in handling issues of Integrated Human Settlements and basic service as from 2014/15 financial year. These municipalities include:
 - Emalahleni
 - Steve Tshwete
 - Mbombela
 - Govan Mbeki
 - Victor Khanye
 - Bushbuckridge
 - Umjindi
33. Chairperson, we are also aware that the Government Program of Action shall not be a success if our actions do not find clear expression in the 14 outcomes that we are destined to support. Accordingly our province has approved a Provincial Programme of Action that cut across all sector departments that should ensure that service delivery reaches the previously marginalized communities and areas that warrant special attention.

36 Honourable Chairperson and Committee, the responses provided here and the report as tabled as part of the debate for the public service week are a mere contribution of our efforts as a province to improve service delivery and enhance the quality of lives for the citizens of Mpumalanga. We may have challenges in some of the areas that have been noted already but with determination and the plans at hand we have the necessary confidence that they shall yield the positive results.

I thank you.