

**KEY NOTE ADDRESS BY THE MPUMALANGA MEC FOR CO-OPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND  
TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS, MR SK MASHILO, TO THE MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL SALGA  
MEMBER'S ASSEMBLY ON THE 02<sup>ND</sup> OF AUGUST 2018 AT THE WINKLER HOTEL,  
WHITE RIVER**

**Mpumalanga Provincial Chairperson of SALGA, Cllr M Chirwa**

**Deputy Chairpersons**

**Provincial Executive Officer, Ms. Gugu Langa**

**Salga National CEO, Mr Xolile George**

**Head of Cogta Department, Mr Peter Nyoni**

**PEC members of SALGA**

**NEC deployees**

**Amakhosi, Makgoshi, Makhosi**

**Executive Mayors**

**Speakers**

**Councillors**

**Municipal Managers**

**Guests from Canada**

**All Municipal and SALGA officials**

**Exhibitors, Sponsors and all the Stakeholders**

Greetings

1. It is an honour for me, as MEC of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs in the Mpumalanga Province, to be standing before the Local Government practitioners at the beginning of women's month.
2. What makes it more interesting to speak in this Provincial members' assembly is the fact that it happens in the year of uTata Nelson Rholihlahla Mandela and Mama Albertina Sisulu, our struggle icons, to whom we owe our democracy as a country.
3. The mere mention of the names of these struggle icons is motivation enough to all of us due to their selfless contribution to the liberation struggle in South Africa.
4. We have held numerous memorial lectures where we mostly spoke about the life and deeds of ubaba Nelson Mandela.
5. As we posthumously remember him, we remember his teachings through the narrative work that he has left us.

6. In commemorating his centenary birthday, would he have still been alive, we are still inspired by his great teachings especially when he said: *“Real leaders must be ready to sacrifice all for the freedom of their people.”*
7. On the 21<sup>st</sup> of September 1953, during his address to the ANC conference, he said: *“There is no easy walk to freedom anywhere and many of us will have to pass through the valley of the shadow of death again and again before we reach the mountain tops of our desires.”*
8. We are humbled by the words of encouragement in a letter he wrote to the now late Mama Winnie Nomzamo Madikizela Mandela on the 1 February 1975, which said; *“Difficulties break some men but make others. No axe is sharp enough to cut the soul of a sinner who keeps on trying, one armed with the hope that he will rise even in the end.”*
9. As leaders of in local government, you are faced with a number of challenges that seek to break your spirits.
10. Tata Nelson Mandela’s words of encouragement should carry us all the time, as we arm ourselves with the hope that things will shape up at the end.
11. I urge all of you never to forget our women heroines, Mama Adelaide Tambo, Mama Albertina Sisulu, Mama Winnie Madikizela Mandela and many others who have shaped our democracy.
12. We owe the positions we are holding today to their never-die and positive attitude towards the struggle, even though it was hard.
13. Today you are heads of municipalities. Leading the communities in our province due to the foundation they laid for us.
14. I regard this as a relay race, where one runs his or her distance and then hand over the baton to the next leader.
15. That leader will have to build on the foundation laid, and ensure that the next one who will receive the baton from him or her, must find it easy to stay in front, because the hard work has been done.
16. As leaders in Local Government, a foundation of Governance and Leadership was laid by your predecessors.
17. Your task is to take these institutions together with the communities to greater heights. To the mountain tops.

18. It is unfortunate that our communities seem not to agree with us that you are taking them to a better tomorrow. The question is, what more can we do to show them that we are moving closer to a better tomorrow?
19. Each and every day, we wake up to a protest in a number of our townships.
20. When doing an analysis to the cause of these protests, fingers point to us that we are not leading together with our communities. There are some Ward Councillors who do not call Community meetings. Question is, what is the role of Speakers of Council in holding the Ward Councillors accountable?
21. The question that comes to my mind is whether our pillars as government are failing to yield good results we are envisaging.
22. Let me remind the members of how we said we are going to improve local government performance in order to ensure quality service delivery and ultimately, putting the local government sector on a positive path to achieving the vision of the National Development Plan.
  - a) We said we are going to ensure that members of society have sustainable and reliable access to basic services.
  - b) That we would strengthen intergovernmental arrangements for a functional system of co-operative governance for local government.
  - c) That we will maintain democratic, well governed and effective municipal institutions capable of carrying out their departmental mandate as per the Constitution of the Republic.
  - d) That we will ensure sound financial management, and
  - e) That we will expand Local Public Employment Programme through Community Work Programme (CWP), EPWP, LED.
23. As we are gathered here today, we need to ask ourselves if we are really doing as we have promised our communities. If not, we need to re-strategize and respond to what our communities want.
24. As the Department, we have put strategies to realise the priorities of government we in our quest to execute outcome 9 and its outputs, namely:
  - a) Ensuring that all the 20 municipalities adopted and approved legally compliant IDP's and that, all 17 local municipalities are monitored on the provision of basic services (water, sanitation, electricity and refuse removal)

- b) Ensuring the enhancement of MIG expenditure patterns for 17 local Municipalities,
  - c) Ensuring the enhancement of jobs creation through Community Works Programmes, Youth and Waste Management programme,
  - d) Ensuring the review of 20 Municipal SDFs and land use schemes to be in line with SPLUMA,
  - e) Ensure the Improvement of the functionality of ward committees through the development and implementation of framework for ward committees, [By the way, our Ward Committees are now remunerated]
  - f) Assist all 20 municipalities in appointing suitably qualified senior managers and monitor the implementation of back to basics (B2B) programme and integrated municipal support plan (IMSP).
  - g) Institutionalising the Operation *Vuka Sisebente* model and support all 17 local municipalities to implement public participation programmes,
  - h) Strengthen support to institutions of Traditional Leaders and MPHTL.
25. Programme Director, the Province has launched the *Satise Silalele* programme that will enhance our service delivery agenda.
26. The challenge that most Municipalities are faced with is their inability to attract suitably qualified managers.
27. As we speak, majority of our municipalities have not yet appointed Municipal Managers. There are Municipalities where Directors and CFO's have resigned and they have not yet been replaced. The resolution of the Premier's Coordination Forum (PCF) is that, all these vacant positions must be filled by September 2018.
28. This create instability in the municipality since there is no one to make proper decisions and guide the Council properly.
29. We believe this is the reason why we have so many litigations in our institutions because of lack of proper guidance to the political leadership.
30. Further the report by the AG indicates that we are not handling our finances in the satisfactory manner. This is the reasons why irregular expenditures are increasing instead of declining.
31. The fruitless and wasteful expenditure continues to haunt our institutions.

32. It is for this reason that as a Department, we continue to assist these institutions by seconding managers to assist in ensuring that all the systems are in place until the proper appointments are concluded. In this regard, the Provincial Government will intervene through section 139 (1) of the MFMA to some Municipalities in due course.
33. As the Department that supports local government, we have come up with a solution to the challenge where Municipalities are owed money by the departments.
34. We have already quantified what is owed to municipalities and we welcome the pronouncement by the MEC for Treasury that, the money owed by Departments will be deducted from their equitable share allocations and be deposited directly to the Municipalities. But we also need to make a clear investigation as to whether majority of public representatives and civil servants are paying for the services of the municipality where they are residing.
35. We further believe that this will alleviate the sum owed by Municipalities to Eskom and ensure that services are rendered in a sustainable manner. As practitioners in Local Government, we need to look for alternative sources of energy, learning from the Canada examples where energy is generated from waste.
36. As the members assembly, we need to do an introspection and make an honest assessment of how did we find ourselves in this predicament.
37. What stops us to implement the IDP projects at the beginning of each financial year if really we do approve multiyear budgets? Is it the matter of poor planning?
38. We see our officials resorting to the courts of law instead of exhausting the internal processes in dealing with grievances. This has a high potential of crippling the already stressed resources of our municipalities.
39. Programme Director and members, I would like to urge all of you to ensure that lasting relations are built among all the stakeholders, in the spirit of the Intergovernmental relations.
40. At all times, let the matters of dispute amongst stakeholders be resolved in a manner that does not bring the institution into disrepute and that does not hamper service delivery.

41. As a people, we need each other. Reiterating the words of Tata Mandela during his inauguration 10th of May 1994, I will say: *“The task at hand will not be easy, but you have mandated us to change South Africa from a land in which the majority lived with little hope, to one in which they can live and work with dignity, with a sense of self-esteem and confidence in the future.”*
42. As local government practitioners, you are at the coalface of service delivery. You are expected to think hard, work hard, to close the gap between the poor and the middle class in our communities by being decisive as you implement your Council decisions.
43. Executive Mayors must make time to engage with their employees at least ones per quarter. This builds good working relations.
44. If you fail to bring hope to our communities, the whole government of the ANC will collapse. Surely this is not what we want.
45. Programme Director, SALGA is still relevant to its mandate to transform local government to enable it to fulfil its developmental mandate. It continues to represent, and protect the interest of local government as it acts as an employer body for its members.
46. May I conclude by saying that as the Members Assembly, you should look into the reviewal of the powers and functions of District Municipalities in our Province. Yes I see them getting clean audit opinions from the AG, but how does this translate to the Local Municipalities and how does it impact on the provision of quality services to our communities?
47. As the Department of Cogta, we shall initiate the engagements with District Municipalities to revisit their responsibility in relation to their Local Municipalities. [Revisit the functions of Category B and C Municipalities].
48. I would like to urge Executive Mayors to send to my office their IDP Community meetings programme. This will assist me in ensuring that all the sector Departments do attend these important engagement platforms with our communities.
49. Further, ensure that as political heads of institutions, you know the programme of the AG and make time to welcome the AG teams as they will be commencing with the audit of the 2016/2017 Annual Financial Statements.

50. I would love to wish the members' assembly all the best as you deliberate on issues that will take our local government to greater heights.