

SPEAKERS NOTES BY THE MEC FOR COGTA, MPL XOLILE NQATHA DURING THE DEPARTMENTAL STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION HOSTED AT THE ROYAL ST ANDREWS HOTEL, PORT ALFRED, NDLAMBE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

02 SEPTEMBER 2019

THEME: GROWING SOUTH AFRICA TOGETHER THROUGH AN INTERGRATED STRATEGIC PLAN OF COGTA

Programme Facilitator,

Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee,

Chairperson of the EC House of Traditional Leaders, Nkosi Nonkonyana,

Provincial Executive of SALGA,

Government officials from all spheres of government,

Our key stakeholders,

Invited guests

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

We are assembled here over three days with the sole purpose of developing the 1st draft of an integrated Strategic Plan of Cogta for a five-year period from 2020/25. It is a great honour for me and team Cogta to see our key stakeholders and invited guests from all spheres of government present here today. Indeed, this is intergovernmental relations at work. This assembly represents founding provisions of the Constitution that the Republic of South Africa is one, sovereign, democratic state.

Chapter 3 of the Constitution on Co-operative Government under Section 40(1) states clearly that the three spheres of government are “distinct, interdependent and interrelated.” For that reason, we must work together

guided by the principles of cooperative government and intergovernmental relations to improve the quality of life of all citizens.

Equally critical is the call by the IGR Framework Act, 2005 which calls on politicians and officials to make the IGR system work through “a refocus and a mindset change in dealing with co-operative government's common objectives.”

Further, the Constitution of the Republic, which is the supreme law of our country, enjoins us to “heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights.”

New path for Cogta

I am also heartened by the strategic and pointed discussion items in the agenda. At a glance, these pointed items seek to take stock of the state of the department through amongst other things the PESTEL Model. By dissecting the Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal aspects of Cogta, I am certain that the session will be able to guide us to chart a new path for team Cogta in the Eastern Cape Province.

To that end, I urge this collective to adopt a frank, constructive and gloves off reflection on our performance in the 5th administration that has just ended. Such a critical appraisal will ensure that we reposition, re-imagine and re-engineer Cogta as a trusted leader that supports municipalities and traditional leaderships institutions in the delivery of quality and sustainable services.

We cannot overemphasise the great need on the part of team Cogta to provide strategic, impactful and sustainable support to municipalities and traditional leadership institutions that are responsive, caring and accountable to serve our communities better. That is the essence of being the government of the people, for people and by the people.

National Development Plan

The 6th term administration is a period of renewal and rebuilding state institutions to respond to the current challenges facing our country namely,

poverty, unemployment and inequality. In this context, the National Development Plan (NDP) warns us about the growing scourge in the South African society of the “open displays of opulence.”

The NDP further states the following;

“The offensiveness of this behaviour is particularly marked because of South Africa’s high levels of inequality. High levels of unemployment, a feature that skews income distribution even more, exacerbates the effects of conspicuous consumption. This indicates a need to focus on incentive systems in society. Great displays of wealth by people not known to be productively employed or honestly entrepreneurial distort incentives in society. The ability to engage other people, especially the unemployed youth at reasonable incomes is rendered futile.”

“In the interest of a sustainable democracy, every democracy South African especially those able to influence public discourse should disclose the origins of their income and wealth. Failure to take part voluntarily or lying should be socially unacceptable.”

The observations from the NDP document should empower all of us as a collective public servants and traditional leaders who are “able to influence public discourse” to grasp the moment of renewal with both hands and frown upon the “great displays of wealth by people not known to be productively employed or honestly entrepreneurial.”

Election Manifesto

The nation building efforts by State President Cyril Ramaphosa require our undivided support as an opportunity to restore our democratic institutions and return our country to the path of transformation, growth and development.

Outlining the Election Manifesto of the governing party, President Ramaphosa had this to say,

“The country’s future is now in the hands of those who believe in it the most. Together with the people of South Africa, the ANC is ready to write the next

chapter in our country's history. Together with the people of South Africa, the ANC is ready to write the next chapter in our country's history. Let's turn the page and Let's Grow South Africa, Together."

Therefore, invited guests, the 6th administrations is a chapter of;

- new hope in the fight to eradicate unemployment, poverty and inequality.
- uprooting corruption.
- renewal, rebuilding.
- pursuing shared prosperity and inclusive growth. Therefore, we should emerge from this session with clear strategic decisions that are implementable and achievable with the context of the diminishing fiscal envelope.

2019 Lekgotla Resolutions

As you deliberate robustly to find answers to some of the vexed challenges we are faced with we should be guided by the Lekgotla Resolutions that are relevant to our department. These include amongst others;

- department plans and programs must be strictly aligned and informed by the Provincial Development Plan.
- Develop a province wide Local Government Dashboard for Monitoring and Evaluation Ideal Key Performance Indicators of Municipalities
- Develop a research agenda focusing on Local Government working with the four universities in the Province with special focus on improving, the situation of distresses or dysfunctional municipalities.

Highlights of the 5th Administration

As we deliberate over the three days we should also not despair as though we do not have good stories to tell in many areas of service delivery. We have made remarkable progress which includes the establishment of the Local Houses of Traditional Leaders, election of new members of the EC House of

Traditional leaders, coronation of King Mangaliso Ndamase of AmaMpondo aseNyandeni Great Place.

On the local government front the Department supported municipalities with the development of credible Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), conducted and presented results of investigations in line with the provisions of Section 106 (1) of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, in various municipalities.

Other highlights of the 5th term include the following;

- The number of households with access to water has increased from 1,340,230 households which translates to 79% in 2014 to 1,505,816 (89%) in 2018, while the total households with access to sanitation increased from 1,112,096 (66%) in 2014 to 1,353,251 (80%) in 2018.
- Between 2014 and 2018, 187,114 households were connected to the grid and to date the cumulative number of households that have access to electricity is 1,720,945 which translate to 97% of the total households in the Province.

The list is long.

Resilient anti-fraud System

Ladies and gentlemen, the none implementation of the recommendations of the investigations remains a serious cause for concern and must come to an end as we strive to build a resilient anti- fraud and anti-corruption system that operates freely from political interference and is supported by both public officials and citizens.

It is a fact that all the municipalities that are led by the ANC are paralysed by acts of instability of one kind or another be it appointments, tenders, manufactured protests, genuine complaints about lack of service delivery, etc. In some instances, at the centre of that municipal instability is the toxic role played by members of labour unions in opposition to measures aimed at institutionalising good governance and sound financial management.

These are matters that require serious and frank discussions at political level, and that is my area of responsibility. We cannot turn a blind eye when our municipalities are collapsing in full view of the political vanguard and its alliance partners. We must take steps to reclaim our heritage, integrity and credibility as the trusted leader of society.

We need to remind ourselves that the freedom we enjoy today was achieved through struggle, determination and great sacrifices from our people.

Violent and Service Delivery Protests

Likewise, the ongoing violent and service delivery protests remain an indictment to our government as a leader of society, under the banner of the ruling ANC, the oldest, tried and tested liberation movement in Africa. According to the Municipal IQ, which monitors protests via information that publicly available, such as media reports and police media statements service delivery protests from January to May 2019 according to provinces, revealed that the Eastern Cape Province stands at 17% after Gauteng Province. They also observed that;

“May (2019) saw a slight drop-off in protests. Protests remain a special concern, however, where the level of violence appears to be ratcheting up, with petrol bombs used, motorists and journalists targeted, and even crèches in the firing line,” said Municipal IQ economist Karen Heese.

One of the common features of these protest actions is a constant culture of lawlessness which borders on lack of respect for other people rights and total disregard for the rule of law. These are issues that reflect badly on both the political and administrative leadership in all spheres of government. As leadership we are charged with the responsibility of using the country's resources, skills, talents and assets for all South Africans to achieve social and economic objectives.

The NDP directs us as follows,

“The quality of leadership is critical to spark and accelerate change in areas that government controls to induce behaviour. People are likely to conduct themselves ethically if they see justice served on those who break the law.”

CONCLUSION

The following aspects needs serious attention and attention this session must design strategies to deal with the challenges.

1. Strengthening inclusive governance mechanisms to increase accountability and trust in Local Government
2. Support sector stability
3. District level shared services model so as to achieve efficiencies
4. Coordinate the establishment a single monitoring system to enable the Province and Municipalities to access reliable data on departmental and Municipal performance in terms of implementation of plans and expenditure performance
5. Strengthen the interface between the formal institutions of democracy and Traditional leadership institutions

In order for us to be able to do the above tasks we need to influence the reviewal of intergovernmental fiscal allocations and grants regime to local government. The reviewal of the funding model for the district municipalities as strategic centre to foster regional economic planning and local municipal support for the Province.

In order for us to deal with spatial transformation and inclusion we need to give support to our integrated spatial planning and support services. In order for us to deal with the above we need to come up with strategies to deal with the following challenges:

- Access to land
- Poor coordination on spatial planning
- Lack of suitable located land for settlement close to work opportunities
- Influence direction of economic infrastructure for the benefit of social infrastructure.

All the above tasks need a department that is well capacitated, professional and able to play a meaningful role in support and coordination. This then is calling for the analysis of the current organizational structure and include in such discussions the effective approach on decentralization

Good luck to a fruitful strategic planning session.

I thank you.