

**ADDRESS BY THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO, AMBASSADOR
CHUPU MATHABATHA ON THE OCCASION OF THE
SALGA PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE HELD AT THE RANCH
RESORT.**

20 September 2016

Programme Facilitator;

MEC for CoGHSTA, Mme Mmakoma Makhurupetje;

The Chairperson of SALGA, Cllr Mogobo Magabe and the
entire Provincial Executive Committee;

SALGA NEC representative,

The Executive Mayors of Polokwane, Cllr. Thembi Nkadimeng

The Executive Mayor of Capricorn District, Cllr. John Mpe

Other Executive Mayors present, Mayors of our local

municipalities, Speakers, Chief Whips and all Councillors

The leadership of the Limpopo House of Traditional Leaders

led by Kgoši Malesela Dikgale;

Chapter 9 institutions and representative of state-owned-
entities;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Let me take this opportunity to appreciate and acknowledge the
invitation for us to be part on this Provincial Conference of the
South African Local Government Association (SALGA).

It is a rare honour and privilege on our part for it is the first conference of this nature since August the 3rd local government elections in our country.

It is therefore befitting that I must first and foremost take this opportunity to congratulate all councillors on your election as the representatives and leaders of our people.

On my own behalf, and on behalf of Limpopo Provincial Government, I also congratulate our newly inaugurated Executive Mayors and Mayors of our District and Local Municipalities.

In the same vein, I must congratulate all councillors who have been elected into the Political Management Teams, PMTs of our various municipalities.

We congratulate you with the knowledge and conviction that you are not oblivious to the challenges ahead, and that you are equal to the task.

The tasks at hand include but not limited to:

- addressing the huge service delivery backlog in our communities;
- addressing poor communication and accountability relationship with communities;

- addressing challenges of political administrative interface that tend to blur the lines and compromise professionalism ;
- tackling rampant fraud and corruption that continue to rear their ugly heads in our municipalities;
- Dealing with increasing number and violent nature of service delivery protests;
- Addressing capacity problems at the local government sphere; and above all,
- Attending to the matters of resource and financial management constrains that confront our local sphere of government day-in-day-out;

Chairperson

I have got no doubt, whatsoever in my mind, that this important conference will allocate sufficient time and energy to deal with these and all the other issues that have come to characterise local sphere of governance.

The strategic objective should be to ensure that local government is powered to serve as a reliable and dependable vehicle for effective and efficient delivery of services to the people.

Programme director;

Your conference is taking place under a well thought through theme, which says “***Ushering in the fourth term of democratic and people-centred local government***”.

This theme is in line with the slogan for our Provincial Government; our slogan says that ‘**development is about people**’. In Tshivenda it says; “***Vhathu ndi mapfura...***”.

The message from both our slogan and the theme for this conference is that everything we do must be with and for the people; nothing against the people.

This says, the moment you start saying, ‘they don’t understand, they don’t listen’. You have lost touch.

I know that some of you are fairly new in local government. I want to say to you that you have joined a sphere of government that has contributed social and economic development of our communities in an unprecedented pace.

Since the advent of our democratic local government, the majority of our people have increased access to wide range of basic services and more opportunities have been created for them.

Our local government structures, working in partnership with other government spheres have ensured electrification of almost 80% of households in this province.

We have also connected over 70% of households to clean drinking water.

In the same vein, we have tarred thousands of kilometres of road network, mostly in rural areas.

We are continuing to improve on the provisioning of decent sanitation and refuse removal.

We have built community halls, recreational facilities and libraries in the most rural of our communities.

We have achieved much; yet so much still need to be done. And for that reason, that's why you are here today.

Chairperson;

I think that, even though local government has achieved so much in such a short space of time, its failure was its inability to impress upon the minds and hearts of the people.

The sector has also not been able to communicate its achievements very well.

The achievements I am referring to should be located and understood within the context of administrative and financial constraints in the sector.

We all know as a matter of fact that success breeds success. That when you do well, you heighten expectations and that comes with greater pressure to deliver more and deliver faster.

So it makes sense that local government sometimes comes under great pressure because it is the sphere closest to the people. And when more is expected from municipalities, then we can all agree that conflict is bound to characterise the life of a municipalities.

My observation of local government, especially after my recent structured engagement with the SALGA Provincial Executive Committee, is that you are doing your best to implement the electoral mandate that the voters have bestowed on you.

I think we just need a way to explain ourselves better to the communities that we serve, and shift some of these perceptions pestering the local government sector.

I am one of those who acknowledge that there are dire challenges in local government but I also see local government as a great resource to the work of all government, including the Provincial government that some of us represent here today.

There are many solutions that can be invented by local government. The first challenge that I want to put forward for this watershed Conference is the development of a viable **Consequence Management Framework**. You should recommend to the **Provincial Executive Council** a draft **Consequence Management Framework** that we could all adopt to defend the image and integrity of local government sector in our province, and the country as a whole.

There has to be consequences for failure to ensure sound financial management. There must be consequences for failure to comply with laws and regulations. There should also be consequences for ignoring the recommendations of the Auditor General.

There has to be fair consequences for everything but that has to be in line with the values of Public Management as espoused in Chapter 7 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

Programme Director;

This Provincial Conference should and must choose to mandate ***Task Teams*** of ***Councillors and Municipal Managers*** and ***Senior Managers*** to recommend to SALGA a ***Consequences Management Framework that I have already alluded to.***

You can then canvass same with the MEC for CoGHSTA who would then forward it to the Provincial Executive.

The guiding philosophy should be the need to rewrite a good appealing name for local government.

As I have already said, I view local government as a resourceful sphere that has this untapped potential and capacity to invent working solutions to challenges of negative public perceptions.

Programme facilitator;

During the State of the Province Address, we highlighted some of the high-level programmes that we are implementing to deliver efficient services.

Working together across the spheres we should be able to deal with the following through the commissions of this important Local Government Conference and beyond:

We should be able to:

- Agree and adopt strategies to fast-track implementation of the ***Limpopo Development Plan*** and its 10-point targets;
- Prepare and build up to the planned Economic Indaba that the Province is grappling with at the moment;
- Localise the ***Provincial Industrialisation Strategy*** so that we can reduce the current unemployment rate in our Province which stands at 18,9%;
- Prioritise ***Skills Development for the Youth*** so that they could stand a good opportunity to benefit from the resources of their naturally well-endowed Province;
- Agree on how SMME Development and ***Development of Cooperatives*** could be most preferred way of getting our people out of poverty;
- How do we get those municipalities that are deemed strategic and in the ***Special Economic Zones*** to be regarded as well-governed municipalities in the mind of the public and private sectors; and

- How do we survive our water scarcity and regular drought cycles; how do we emulate those countries that are able to build world class cities in our semi deserts;
- How do we conclude the issue of Polokwane Metro, and establish new cities in Thohoyandou, Tubatse, Makhado, Mokopane and elsewhere?

Programme Director;

The fact that we are implementing a fresh electoral mandate following the August Local Government Elections gives us an excellent platform and opportunity to rise up to the expectation of both the NDP and the LDP.

Let us therefore start on a good footing and the way to do that is to do the right things.

Colleagues,

The term of office of councillors is 5 (five) years.

When you are a newly elected councillor this 5 year term may seem like a life time; but it is not.

Like a contract of employment, the end of councillors' term is not always pleasant on the personal side.

It is for this reason that as government we are concerned about the plight of councillors post their term.

In this context, government, working together with SALGA has set up systems to ensure that councillors have some form of a safety net when their term of office ends.

We therefore take this opportunity to request that we must do all the small things right from the beginning.

Please councillors ensure that you form part of the pension funds arrangements that are there for the Sector, that you comply and file SARS tax returns so that your pension pay-outs are paid out in full at the end of the term.

In my engagement with the SALGA Provincial Leadership, I was briefed about what the leadership termed the lack of parity in remuneration of councillors and other office bearers in local government.

I do sympathise with you about that situation but I know that my counterparts in the National Government are just as concerned

and are diligently and carefully working on this important matter.

We will indeed continue our best to ensure that the matter is resolve to the benefit of all of you.

The other small matter is that we must do is to declare our financial interests as councillors. We must do this so that when we have assets that we have acquired through our own means we are not demonised for enjoying the fruits of such assets.

The other thing is that we must do things according to the book.

We have been well inducted now as councillors and I have had a privilege of perusing your ***Induction Manual*** and I am happy about what it contains.

If the Municipal Finance Management Act says that you should not open a ***Municipal Bank Account*** without following certain procedures, please do not do so.

If the Municipal Finance Management Act and Supply Chain Management Policy does not allow you to be involved in procurement processes and limit you to providing only

oversight, please do not be involved in procurement processes and limit yourself only to providing oversight

If you are expected to provide leadership during the Municipal Audit processes, please provide that leadership.

Where you are requested to consult communities before taking a decision then rather over-consult than under-consult.

Where the minimum competency requirements for appointment of officials require a certain qualification before appointment of such an official, please comply fully with the law without reservation. Never ever say the leadership says deploy so and so even when they don't have qualifications. We will never do that. Don't lie on my behalf.

When municipalities send you to capacity building programmes, please complete those courses without dropping out and acquire the necessary skills that the municipality requires you to possess;

Where the Municipal Manager cautions you against committing unauthorised, irregular and fruitless and wasteful expenditure, do as you are advised or take further advice but in the final

analysis, do what is best for service delivery and financial accountability.

Take advantage of all the capacity building programmes of SALGA, CoGHSTA, Treasury and those from your municipality.

Study all the local government laws and stay away from all the forbidden activities.

Chairperson,

As I go towards my conclusion, I want to repeat the questions which were posed to the 2007 SALGA National Conference by the former our country, President Thabo Mbeki. In my view, these questions remain relevant today, as they were 8 years ago.

The President asked:

- “
- How can we make SALGA accountable for what happens or does not happen in local government?***
 - How will we ensure that SALGA plays a leading role in stabilising local government?***
 - How will SALGA improve its ability to anticipate tensions arising from communities and what mechanisms should be used to address whatever issues facing poor communities?***

- What practical role is there for SALGA in the fight against poverty and underdevelopment?***
- How will we ensure that SALGA makes members that bring the sphere of local government into disrepute to account for their actions?***
- How does SALGA help with the day-to-day work of municipalities and what impact do your interventions have?"***

Chairperson;

I trust that sometime during the course of this conference, you will make time to respond to these pertinent questions.

I am also confident that as this generation of councillors you will continue the cordial working relations with our traditional leaders. You will consult and work with them on all matters of development in their areas.

Let also take this opportunity, to commend the outgoing leadership of SALGA for the work they have done for this organisation and the people of Limpopo over past 5 years.

You have indeed done your part. You have contributed your skills and energy to better the lives of our people – for that we wish to salute your tenacity and unwavering commitment to serve.

We also wish all the best to the incoming leadership of SALGA in Limpopo. They too will enjoy our support, cooperation and guidance.

I also wish you fruitful deliberations in your conference

Pula!