

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO,
CHUPU MATHABATHA ON THE OCCASION OF THE
VISION 2030 SUMMIT HOSTED BY TOPCO MEDIA, HELD IN
JOHANNESBURG.**

21 June 2017

Programme Moderator, Mr Peter Ndoro;

Our hosts, Topco Media;

Executive Mayor for the City of Ekurhuleni, Cllr Mzwandile
Masina;

Dr. Petrus De Kock from BrandSA;

Esteemed panellists;

Invited guests;

Distinguished ladies and Gentlemen:

Let me start first by extending my appreciations to Topco
Media, in particular, the CEO Mr Ralf Fletcher for your
generous invitation.

We truly appreciate this opportunity to interact and engage on
important matters of national development in the context of our
shared future.

Indeed, for us to work towards a particular future we first need to visualise it, embrace it and only then we can be able to claim it.

Our long-term future has been visualised through the National Development Plan which was crafted some few years ago.

The people of South Africa, united in their diversity have all embraced this future as visualised in the NDP.

The challenge for all of us is to put shoulder to the wheel and work in unity towards this shared future.

The NDP envisions a South Africa where everyone feels free yet bounded to others; where everyone embraces their full potential, a country where opportunity is determined not by birth, but by ability, education and hard work.

It is agreed that 'realizing such a society will require transformation of the economy and focused efforts to build the country's capabilities. To eliminate poverty and reduce inequality, (and to ensure that) the economy grow faster and in ways that benefit all South Africans.

The Plan appreciates the fact that our young people deserve better educational and economic opportunities, and focused efforts are needed to eliminate gender inequality.

This is a vision embraced by all South Africans. The challenge as I have said is about navigating the routes towards such a future and also about the pace of such a navigation process.

The other point of collective agreement is that for us to achieve the objective listed in the NDP we need to build the capacity of the state.

The need is obviously to build a state that has the necessary capacity to respond to the country's developmental needs.

According to the expression in Chapter 13 of the NDP, a capable state is a state that makes citizens and residents feel loved, respected and cared for in public institutions.

It is a state that makes citizens feel that what they contribute in terms of taxes is ploughed back through quality of public services rendered by government. Obviously, this will manifest through:-

- good hospitals and clinics with well-trained doctors and nurses,
- good schools with well educated, trained and caring teachers
- good libraries with wealth of books and knowledgeable librarians
- good police stations with respected and upright police.

Without doubt, a capable and developmental state will also help government to accelerate on the delivery of basic services such as sanitation, electricity and portable drinking water.

Indeed, as former President Thabo Mbeki has said at the launch of the then Public Administration Leadership Academy (PALAMA):

‘in a democracy, one of the prime duties of the government is to give realisation to the rights of its citizens, not only to ensure their freedom through carefully structured relations amongst the different institutions, but, also, to advance their rights and opportunities through access to services’

Programme Director;

To a greater extent the demands of a capable and developmental states are related to the dictates of good governance and ethical leadership.

In this regard, the NDP mandate us to:

- Build a resilient anti-corruption system;
- Strengthen the accountability and responsibility of public servants
- Create an open, responsive and accountable public service, and
- Strengthen judicial governance and the rule of law

The Auditor General has coined a phrase called consequence management. The essence of this is that those who off-ramp from the route of good governance and ethical leadership must be met with an unfriendly fist of the law.

There is just no way we can achieve our developmental objectives if we do not prioritise the issue of good governance and ethical leadership.

No so long ago, our Province of Limpopo had almost collapsed because of lack of good governance.

You would remember that at that time, the Province had accumulated over R2.7 billion in unauthorised expenditure.

The situation was such that hospitals were without medication and food, schools were without textbooks, and public servants were facing a real possibility of not getting their salaries.

The truth of the matter was that, that situation had the birthmarks of poor governance and unethical tendencies.

National government had to intervene and also apply consequence management.

Several HODs and Senior members of the administration had to be suspended and charged. The Director General was subsequently relieved of her duties in our pursuance to recoup lost state monies.

Today we can safely say we are on course. We have regained corporate governance and the confidence of the people of that province to continue governing them.

Accountability has since become the epicentre of our effort to build good corporate governance, the ultimately Developmental State.

Programme Director;

The accountability is even more crucial at the local sphere of governance, the municipality. We all know that local government is at the coalface of service delivery. It is the strategic centre of gravity in term of delivery and meaningful improvement of conditions of living of our people.

Once municipalities become unaccountable, there will definitely be a distance created between the people and the institutions of governance.

In most cases, it is found that even the very Integrated Development Plans that are supposed to be people-driven do not speak to the needs of the people on the ground.

Municipalities turn to delegate the responsibility to develop these IDPs to third parties who only engage with the communities in a **box-ticking** manner.

As a result, you end up with IDPs which are not in line with the needs and aspirations of the people. This in many cases - is a reason behind service delivery protests that we have seen and continue to see many parts of the country.

You will find that a municipality is planning to deliver a road whilst the people are without drinking water. To make matters even worse, local councillors who are supposed to be with the people on the ground, disappear from communities as soon as they are elected.

They become the representatives of communities just in name and not in actual truth.

As I already alluded to, this maximises the distance between the leaders and the people they lead. This alone is actually a fertile seed for disgruntlement, disillusionment and anarchy.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The law requires that Public Representatives should meet with the people from time to time, yet this hardly ever happens. Municipalities must revive and sustain their Public Participation programmes in order to ensure that they have dynamic link with communities.

Communities must be made to own up development plans of municipalities, understand budgetary constraints and be abreast with project delivery timelines. This is what our forebears in 1955 meant when they met in Kliptown and declared that “***the people shall govern***”.

It is against this background that municipalities must deal with challenges that include but not limited to:

- Poor accountability and relationship with communities
- Problems related political administrative interface
- Lack of compliance with the legislative and regulatory frameworks for municipalities
- Fraud and corruption
- Lack of proper planning and poor project management, and
- At times lack of suitably qualified and skilled personnel in critical divisions.

Programme Director

In addressing these challenges, the municipalities are required to take a journey back to basics.

There is no doubt that the end result of getting our basics right, will be an improved delivery of quality services to our communities.

Getting basics right means that our local authorities will be well positioned and capacitated to deliver clean drinking water, decent sanitation, electricity, shelter, timeous waste removal and quality roads.

Part of what it is required in this **back to basics journey** I have referred to is:

- The Filling of vacancies in strategic positions with qualified and skilled personnel,
- Improving expenditure on capital and maintenance budgets,
- Improving integrated planning, infrastructure delivery and promoting economic development,
- Promoting good governance and accountability,
- Strengthening the relationship between the institution of traditional leadership and municipalities, and
- Democratizing governance by putting people and their concerns first.

Getting the **basics right** should also mean that we must improve the image of Local Government. To achieve this does not need the services of a Public Relations company or something like that.

It simply means that we must be seen and felt by communities in action, doing the right thing.

Example of this is clean governance – our municipalities must improve their audit outcomes.

The one thing we should never tolerate is a disclaimer audit opinion. Nothing undermines our people like a disclaimer audit opinion.

It can never, and should never be accepted that any municipal entity can simply fail or refuse to submit books to the Auditor General.

It is this type of behaviour that makes our people to lose confidence in those that they have elected to represent them.

There should be serious consequences against all senior officials and councillors of a municipality that gets a disclaimer from the AG. For me, disclaimer simply means **‘refusing to account’** – and this can never be accepted.

Once more, let accountability be the epicentre of good corporate governance at all levels of government, local government in particular.

Programme Director;

I appreciate that the day ahead is still long. I therefore do not wish to hold you hostage with a long political speech.

Let me conclude by re-inviting all of us to take the business of this summit seriously. As government we hope to benefit from the submissions and resolutions of this important summit.

I wish you a successful session of this 2017 edition of **Vision 2030** summit.

I thank you!