

Members of Mayoral Committees (MMCs)

Head: Human Settlements

Senior Management from the Department

Senior Management from Municipalities

Officials from all Government Spheres

Human Settlements Institutions

Distinguished Guests

## **Lotjhani**

Let me start by expressing my excitement about today's inter-governmental relations forum (IGR). One perfectly knows that it has been few years since the municipal cycle started and few months for national and provincial government.

It is therefore pleasing that after some hectic political activities and settling in portfolios, this much awaited meeting is finally happening. That said, we can all agree that it is long overdue.

Now that we are all here, let us join hands and put energies together in shaping the future of this country and this province in particular. You are all warmly welcome.

In May this year the population of this country went to the polls and gave the ruling African National Congress yet another mandate to govern the country.

Several political pundits and polls suggested that the ANC may need some coalition to govern the country – but little did they know that the country’s populace followed their conscience and retained the ANC in power.

This not just as a mere continuation of another five year period, but because the party’s 2019 Election Manifesto contains clear achievable commitments meant to grow this country.

In persuasion of the agenda of transforming the country, the manifesto declares that “we will ensure that Sustainable Human Settlements help transform the spatial legacy of apartheid and build a more inclusive society”

The 54<sup>th</sup> ANC National Conference on Social Transformation made an emphasis on three items relevant to us:

- Transformatory urban planning and management that changes apartheid spatial residential patterns must be focused on, with a move away from dense single-use residential areas to those with appropriate recreational and sports facilities, other socio economic amenities and the necessary transport system,
- In the creation of new cities and towns, planning should promote de-reacialisation of the society and development consolidation of peri-urban areas, and lastly
- Accelerated implementation and consolidation of human settlements development legislation to utilize suitably positioned land for housing, and the enforcement of existing laws and by-laws.

I am raising these issues in order for us to be galvanized to transform society and bring about much needed structured and futuristic development.

As such we require an effective state - a state with capable individuals that are deployed to strategically influence policy direction to meet the needs of our communities.

Gathered here today, one is resolute that we are well equipped with all the necessary skills, resources and knowledge, amongst others to implement this policy directive.

This gathering's objective amongst other things is to activate our working relations, enhance understanding of our roles and fast tracking service delivery.

We have an opportunity to thrush out any negative energy that may appear to hinder our commitment of bittering the lives of our people.

During my Policy and Budget Vote presentation, I announced four priority areas that the Department will focus on within the next five years (2019 – 2024) MTSF,

- 1 Area Based intervention

Inter-governmental and inter-Departmental relations are central in ensuring integrated and coordinated planning; improved spatial, social and economic integrated in new development; and ensuring the provision of basic infrastructure in projects;

## 2 Accelerated of informal settlements upgrading initiatives

Focus on upgrading of all informal settlements, in particular within the Govan Mbeki, eMalahleni, Steve Tshwete, Thaba Chweu, and City of Mbombela Municipal areas, some of which are declared mining towns.

## 3 Providing housing opportunities in an integrated manner

The implementation of the 14 existing mega projects otherwise referred to as (BNGs) and finalization of township processes in the 47 BNG project.

## 4 Creating an enabling environment through responsive policies and programmes.

Allow me to expatiate on this priority because it is the pillar on which all the three spheres of Government stand, my Department will enhance intergovernmental and interdepartmental relations in all human settlements delivery initiatives.

Guided by Intergovernmental Regulations Framework Act (No. 13 of 2005), national government, provincial governments and local governments must promote and facilitate intergovernmental relations in order to provide for mechanisms and procedures to be followed in all matters that relate to service delivery.

We need to create a good working environment amongst the three spheres of government. Literally speaking, the relationship between the provincial and provincial spheres of government should be such that, “the **RIGHT** hand knows what the **LEFT** hand does”.

If this relationship is not nourished and nurtured, we should not be surprised when we go in separate directions whilst in a quest to deliver human settlements development.

The manifestations of our ruined relation has been evident wherein, houses are completed without bulk infrastructure or where houses are built in areas that are outside of the municipal and even provincial spatial development framework, poor management of beneficiaries, undermining of roles and responsibilities, and apparent poor planning.

That said, the department has over the years been given an additional mandate of bulk infrastructure projects most of which comprise of sewer and water services – something which we have to jointly address.

It would appear that the province had prophesied the merger of human settlement and water and sanitation portfolios.

Programme Director, as we continue with the reconfigured mandate, clear direction, funding and alignment will be done in ensuring that these merged portfolios are seamlessly delivered.

One thing for certain though is that sustainable human settlement requires houses, socio-economic facilities, roads, water, sewer services and recreational facilities – something which the province continues to implement.

Programme Director, issues of beneficiary management should be thoroughly looked at. There are a number of challenges in this regard and

we really need to clarify of our roles and responsibilities in as far as this matter is concerned.

There cannot be any success without proper planning. Let me further advance that our mandates are provided for and regulated by legislation.

The Division of Revenue Act and Integrated Development Programme are amongst those that govern our service delivery environment. Let us conduct our business in accordance with applicable prescripts.

It is my strong conviction that the department should not initiate a project without the endorsement of the municipality likewise; municipalities must plan for human settlements projects to ensure the availability of bulk infrastructure.

This forum should ideally craft clear commitments to be implemented by all and sundry.

This should be our focus henceforth. This is also in line with the Presidential District Coordination Service Delivery Model. We must work towards perfecting this planning approach.

As we get deeper into our session, critical presentations will be made that will clearly outline the direction we are heading within the next five years.

Equally important is that municipalities must respond to these departmental plans with their own to arrive at a common desired goal.

I am pleased that the Technical MINMEC did take place and all agreed to address pertinent administrative challenges and forge a seamless working relationship towards the realization of a developed province.

As politicians, ours – gathered here today – we are called to a revolutionary duty. Let us dirty our hands. Our people expect a lot from and we cannot delay any further.

May I conclude by borrowing words uttered by the State President of the Republic during the State of the Nation Address - “In the next five years, we will accelerate the provision of well-located housing and land to poor South Africans”. We shall be gauged by our performance in this regard.

**I Thank You**