

## **KWAZULU-NATAL PREMIER SIHLE ZIKALALA'S REMARKS DURING THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES VIRTUAL WORKSHOP ON CO-OPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS ON 2 FEBRUARY 2022**

Thank you Chairperson for inviting us to be part of this important workshop and to benefit from a number of presentations made by various participants.

This is a very important session which assists us to review and look at the work we are doing as government.

We therefore have learnt a lot from the evolution of the NCOP and its role with regard to intergovernmental relations.

The NCOP has emerged strong as a platform where we are able to canvass the decisions made at a provincial level, in particular which affect other spheres of government and in that regard elevate the views of other provinces and lead to the review of such decisions.

In that regard, the NCOP has made an impact in enhancing participation among the three spheres of government, namely: national, provincial and local arms of government.

Furthermore, the NCOP plays a crucial role in enhancing the formulation and implementation of policy in these various spheres of government.

From where we stand, the NCOP has been a binding force which glues together the works of municipalities, provinces and national government.

A very important point to make is that the NCOP has fulfilled its task to ensure the continuous engagement in provinces but also with organised municipal organs such as SALGA.

Our province is doing very well when it comes to intergovernmental relations, thanks to the binding force of the NCOP which links all three spheres of government.

The emergence or the adoption of the District Development Model came to us as an addition and it complemented the work we were doing under the programme of Operation Sukuma Sakhe (OSS).

The OSS is a programme we adopted as the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government wherein Members of the Executive Council are assigned to districts to implement and monitor various projects.

In KwaZulu-Natal we have 11 districts and we have assigned 11 members of the executive council, comprising of the Premier and 10 MECs.

All of us are assigned or deployed to the districts where we are champions to work there and ensure that all projects which are earmarked for the districts are implemented and monitored accordingly.

In so doing, we become a voice that coordinates between districts and provinces, which becomes an important arm of coordinating between local, provincial and national spheres of government.

So when the District Development Model was adopted and piloted under the leadership of the President, we added to that the concept of one budget and one plan.

As the province, we have moved with speed and efficiency to ensure that IDPs that emerge from the districts are taken care of.

That is why we have implemented district political hubs which ensure a smooth working relationship between local and provincial spheres of government.

We have also created technical hubs which are made up of Heads of Departments who are deployed in the 11 districts.

Each HOD is assigned with officials to ensure that projects are effectively implemented and monitored in the districts.

We are now resuscitating the shared model system which brings technical skills which support all municipalities and districts.

This is derived from Section 154 where critical skills are required to support local government and the shared model brings in the capacity to district and local municipality.

Lastly, let me emphasise the effectiveness of Section 139 in bringing stability and coherence in our municipalities.

We have mostly used Section 139 b to resolve crisis in our municipalities – only twice did we use Section 139 a where we had to dissolve dysfunctional municipalities.

With regard to Section 139 b, we have applied in municipalities where there is dysfunctionality at political and technical level caused by continuous interference by political leaders in the administration of municipalities.

It is easy for municipalities to work if they have stable administration even if it is a council led by a coalition. But if political leaders make it their task to refrain from interfering with administration, political coherence becomes successful.

The case in point is the Richmond Local Municipality which had collapsed but managed to rise again after our intervention. The intervention became successful because of the cooperation received from the municipality and now they are out of provincial administration.

The municipality is stabilised now because of the political will and coherence which makes it easy for municipalities to function effectively.

For some municipalities, it is difficult to sustain themselves as is the case in Mpofana Local Municipality, which has been under administration for more than four years.

The lesson learnt is that we must take note with regard to how we structure and demarcate municipal boundaries.

We also have experiences where, as the province, we intervene but do not get concurrence from the NCOP. Where we don't get concurrence from the NCOP, we then suspend our intervention, only to find that municipalities become worse than they were before our intervention.

Thank you for giving us this platform to air our views in as far as intergovernmental relations are concerned. I don't like to get into detail of what the participants before me have covered.

Thank you.