

CLOSING REMARKS BY THE CHIEF WHIP OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES, ON THE OCCASION OF THE STATE CAPACITY CONFERENCE

Venue: Virtual

Date: 06 May 2020

Time: 15H00

Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces

Speaker of the National Assembly

Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

President of Salga

Honourable Ministers

House Chairpersons

Honourable Chief Whips

Provincial Speakers

Honourable Members

Esteemed Guests

Programme Director, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the participants that participated in today's important session. One thing I have noted in all deliberations, is that transformation of a society entails a complete change in both form and substance.

The scale and scope of the transformation South Africa embarked on after apartheid is without precedence. The country has had to wrestle simultaneously with political, economic and social transformation at all levels.

While the National Development Plan, articulates the required capacity for a capable developmental state, many of the needed capacities are lacking, or have dwindled. Evidence of this assertion is found in the poor institutional performance of South Africa's local government and state – owned entities.

Social Compact

Transformation of our society calls for its reorientation from the past values. It calls for South Africa, to urgently find ways to develop a more inclusive social order that brings labour, government and business into agreement.

Programme Director, we need to critically focus on how vulnerable groups are affected differently. South Africa's stark socio-economic inequalities within and across racial groups are core issues that continue to divide people. This is true economically as well as spatially, psychologically, socially and politically.

There is growing frustration and we have seen it in the second week of July 2021, when the country experienced unprecedented levels of unrest and destruction of public and private property. The July 2021 unrest, is a stark reminder that the rate of improvement in people's lives does not measure up to the expectations of what the post-apartheid scenario was expected to deliver.

The role of intellectual in our democratic discourse

Active and engaged public intellectuals play a crucial part in the ongoing life of democratic societies, perhaps even more so in new democracies like ours. We there would therefore like to thank all the academics that graced this important platform today, we hope our engagements are not going to end here.

We need your capacity to conduct public debates because it is through such debates that we are able to examine our shortcomings and strengths. The need for fresh ideas, debates and engagements on pressing issues has never been greater.

It is in part, through your ideas that we would be able to refine our Oversight instruments, towards outcome –based Oversight that is in the interest of advancing and changing the material position of our people for the better.

Strengthening of Inter-Governmental Governmental Relations

If we are serious about building a capable, developmental state, it therefore means we need to address shortcoming within our Intergovernmental Relations. We need to urgently address:

- Uncertainty which is rife about the status of intergovernmental relations decisions and recommendations, as well as who is responsible for the follow-up of recommendations
- We need to address lack of horizontal integration between the activities of various government departments.
- We need to address the lack of understanding of what IGR means by both politicians and bureaucrats

Conclusion

Members and Councillors, the greatest challenge facing us is inspiring confidence in the people we serve. We have the responsibility to rise above their limitations and help them shape a future they desire for themselves and their families. I hope the ideas, lessons and experiences that have been shared on this platform are not only going to be ideas but rather, will enable us to develop mechanisms to respond more effectively to the need of building a true developmental state.

The fundamental question that has come into sharp focus is what next after these workshops? I agree with the panellists who have sharply raised this question.

To the extent that we don't practically respond to this question in terms of how they should enhance and reposition the oversight work of parliament, the more they become talk shops and the waste of resources of all participants.

It will therefore be incumbent upon our Senior Management of the NCOP to delineate key issues arising from this workshop and advise how they should be operationalised going forward.

I thank all the participants, our panellists and everyone present here.

Thank you