



PARLIAMENT
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**CHAIRPERSON OF NCOP, Ms REFILWE MTSHWENI-TSIPANE,
SCENE-SETTING REMARKS, ON THE OCCASION OF THE
LOCAL GOVERNMENT WEEK, STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

16 SEPTEMBER 2025

- Programme Director, Hon Deputy Chairperson NCOP,
Hon Les Govender
- Presiding Officers of NCOP and Chief Whip of Council
- Ministers/Deputy Ministers, MECs, Provincial Ministers and MMCs
present and virtual platform
- President of SALGA, Cllr Bheke Stofile
- Speakers' from provinces present and virtual platforms
- Honorable Delegates to the NCOP
- Our stakeholders and invited guests
- Ladies and gentlemen
- Good Morning, Molweni

INTRODUCTION

- Let me take this opportunity, on behalf of the Presiding Officers and all Honourable delegates, to deliver Opening Remarks as we begin our Local Government Week, under the theme, ***Restoring the dignity of our people through spatial planning, provision of human settlement, water and sanitation***
- In accordance, we have invited key role players and stakeholders in the local sphere of government, into a dialogue with each other and the NCOP
- This we undertake, with the deliberate intent, to resolve the perennial challenges across our municipalities, in the provision of services as a means to restore dignity to all our people , envisioned in our Constitution
- This we also undertake by re-centering the Constitutional imperatives of this sphere of government, located at the coalface and in the frontlines of our communities
- Today's stakeholder dialogue, as well as the oversight visits which shall inform this week's activities; aims to situate the categorical

expression of the Freedom Charter's call, for ensuring a local government ***by the people for the people and with the people***

- This is wherein ordinary people actively participate and are involved in the decisions that affect their lives
- In this score, our considered view and in line with the spirit of this moment, is for all social partners to put their minds together, to become more attendant to the challenges of local government
- This is notwithstanding the great strides being achieved by municipalities across the length and breadth of our provinces

CONTEXT AND POLICY FOCUS

- Some of the significant successes of this democratic dispensation, through its Constitution, is that it brought about an Institutional transformation in this sphere of government
- Essentially, it reconfigured a system of government that was fundamentally created to advance apartheid spatial settlement and separate development for various communities and racial groups in South Africa
- It created three distinct, interrelated and interdependent (national, provincial and local) spheres of government
- This reconfiguration repositioned the legal framework and status of local government, creating a new dispensation of municipalities, with a new set of objectives and a developmental agenda
- Section 41(1)(f) of the Constitution compels the spheres not to assume any power or function except those conferred on them by the Constitution
- Section 41(1)(h) requires the spheres to co-operate with one another in mutual trust and good faith by, amongst others, assisting and supporting one another

- In the 30 years of democracy, the local government sphere has been at the center of mobilizing and coordinating government services, aimed at improving service delivery and the overall quality of people's lives
- However, local government has been confronted by persistent challenges emanating from structural, social, economic, political, institutional, environmental, and legal related issues
- Thus, the provincial and national government spheres have been a crucial support structure and source for coordination for resource provision, in the quest to ensure that quality services are provided to local communities
- Our nation is still haunted by its history of pain and suffering, that structured and deepened poverty levels, widening inequality that is more visible amongst our communities

- This was due the racialized social order of separate development, which displaced majority of Africans and blacks in general, out of the dignity of social existence, still felt and lived today
- Thus, the economic and development trajectory has been largely extractive, underpinned by the appropriation natural resources and labor; through predatory forms of exploitation
- To date, spatial development in South Africa and in the City of Cape Town more particularly, still reflects high inequality where townships and rural areas are confronted by rampant crime, deepened poverty levels, substance abuse and low development prospects as compared to their counterparts in leafy suburban areas
- This legacy continues to place enormous pressure on the local government sphere, to ensure our people enjoy basic necessities through provision of water, sanitation, electricity distribution, waste management, roads, spatial planning, housing and infrastructure

LOCAL GOVERNMENT WEEK PURPOSE (2025)

- To this extent, the NCOP Local Government Week, is carried out, working together with South African Local Government Association (SALGA), and other stakeholders
- This is an ongoing interface and platform for sharing experiences, showcasing best practices, and a fostering national dialogue on issues impacting local governance
- Its overarching objective is to explore strategies that enhance the quality of life for all people, by strengthening local government structures and improving the delivery of services
- Since the previous Local Government Week, held September 2022, focus was paid to actionable strategies to support municipalities in enhancing performance, upholding integrity, and promoting transparency and accountability
- These efforts were aligned with the broader goal of cultivating a functional and effective local government sphere, that drives South Africa's developmental agenda through the provision of high-quality services to communities

- We are to this extent, calling for closer cooperative governance and intergovernmental relations, as a means to inculcate joint collaborative planning, budget implementation and monitoring of the delivery of resource and development initiatives
- This should include more effective participation of organized local government (SALGA), at provincial and national level, as way of streamlining some of the interrelated challenges
- These include, as often highlighted by SALGA, are rates of debts being owed to municipalities by government departments, which inhibit their financial viability and capacity to service their statutory obligations e.g. water boards and Eskom
- This standing problem is continuous and undermines their ability to discharge their mandate
- Thus, the necessity for an accountability approach and collective oversight, that elevates the aforementioned principles of cooperative governance and intergovernmental relations, as enshrined in Chapter 3 of the Constitution

- Equally, this local government week, is predicated on thinking through mechanisms that can improve consequence management for lack of fiscal discipline such as, unauthorized irregular and wasteful expenditure often cited by Auditor General
- Meaning, some of our key objectives must foreground zero tolerance, on all forms of financial misconduct, mismanagement of public resources and corruption within our oversight agenda
- Furthermore, this Council is further expected to ensure that the provisions of Section 154 of the Constitution are realized
- Accordingly, the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) released a Discussion Document in April on the 1998 White Paper on Local Government Review, following 2025 State of Nation's Address, with specific reference to the state of service delivery
- COGTA elaborated on the importance of the local government to achieve a results-based review with feasible turnaround strategies
- The department emphasized the need for local government to efficiently connect the following arrangements, namely;
 - Service delivery and infrastructure arrangements,

- Governance arrangements,
 - Institutional arrangements, and
 - Financial arrangements
- To this end, the expectation of this week's deliberations and activities, is to compile a report for the consideration of the House
- These actionable outcomes and resolutions, will be channeled to relevant Committees, in particular the Select Committee on Cooperative Governance and Public Administration, for the regular monitoring and tracking on progress and implementation
- In this way, the City of Cape Town, shall be the focus of the local government week, through a targeted outcomes based approach, that revisits various projects and the state of service delivery
- As per the mandate of this House, ensure greater cooperation and resource intervention by the national sphere of government where necessary
- Around the City, the growing housing demand due to in-migration which outpaces job creation, as well as land invasion and rapid growth of informal settlements is an area of great concern

- There is recorded, *high waiting status* especially in areas such as Gugulethu, Khayelitsha, Philippi and Dunoon
- Around 25,5% of households live in 'needy' or 'very needy' areas of the City, especially, Imizamo Yethu, Mitchells Plain, Dunoon, Khayelitsha, Gugulethu, Philippi, Delft, Manenberg and Langa amongst others
- While the Western Cape Government has made efforts to address these, the pace of delivery is not keeping up with demand
- Equally, there is growing calls for a more responsive City, to demands being made especially by low income communities
- In this regard, proper planning needs to be in place to address the needs of the growing urban poor, located around the City
- This is an important feature that lawmaking and oversight bodies should confront and internalize, given the reality of rapid urbanization globally

CONCLUSION

- Let me therefore thank all stakeholders for positively responding to our invitation, to making the NCOP, working together with all spheres of government, an even more effective instrument for oversight and accountability
- Also, thank Members of the Executive, at national, provincial and local level, for being available to interact and dialogue on the said pertinent issues
- I therefore wish you all successful and effective deliberations, as we put our energies together, to fixing the City of Cape Town and Local Government more generally.

Thank you