

**Media Briefing Statement by MEC Makoma Makhurupetje on the first meeting with newly elected Mayors in the Province**

**For immediate release  
01 September 2016  
Good Afternoon,**

Let me take this opportunity to thank you for your positive response to this media briefing session.

As you are aware, we have just emerged from the local government elections which were held on the 03rd of August 2016. The elections marked the end of the five year term of municipal councils elected in 2011 and ushered in the fourth term of local government. Let me take this opportunity to thank the millions of Limpopo citizens who went out in their numbers to vote. It is through the power of their votes that we now have new Mayors and fully constituted Councils in all our Municipalities. Words of appreciation also go to the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) for running free and fair elections.

In the same vein, I also wish to extend my gratitude to the media fraternity for the sterling work done in covering this elections. You did your utmost to ensure that coverage of elections happened without bias and discharged with integrity and highest levels of professionalism. For this we want to thank you and hope that you will continue to assist us in further deepening our democracy. I have convened this meeting today, the 1st of September 2016 (which is Spring day) for purposes of meeting and greeting all newly elected Mayors in our province. This is the first meeting of its kind after the local government elections. In welcoming our new Mayors and their Councils we felt it necessary that we should appraise each other about the state of municipalities as well as the expectations that our people have. The challenges of service delivery are real and it is important that Mayors must hit the ground running so that they are not caught off guard as our people are beginning to lose patience on the ground. Our people have been patiently waiting for basic services for more than 21 years and cannot afford to continue waiting any longer.

Of cardinal importance and central to this meeting was to inform Mayors about the issues they will be inheriting and confronting - so that they are better prepared to respond to these issues accordingly. We also used the meeting for purposes of reflecting broadly on developments within the local government sector with particular emphasis on the objects of Local Government as entailed in the Constitution. The objects of local government is to:

- To provide democratic and accountable government for local communities;
- To ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner;
- To promote social and economic development;
- To promote a safe and healthy environment; and
- To encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government

To us housing is a basic need and is at the forefront of the national agenda of this government. Building a new house for this family must therefore be seen within this context. It was always going to pain us to see Koko and the children living in the old dilapidated structure when there is something we can do to improve their situation.

In our deliberations, we made it clear that the Mayors will have to lead from the front in implementing local government turnaround plan to change the situation in municipalities for the better. Our turnaround plan which is the Back to Basics Approach to local government is based on 5 Pillars which seek to achieve the following objectives:

- Putting people and their concerns first, through effective consultation and public participation;
- Creating conditions for decent living by consistently delivering municipal services of the right quality and standard;
- Good governance which entails cutting down on wastage, spending money prudently, hiring competent officials and ensuring transparency and accountability;
- Sound financial management and accounting which include recovery of debts owed to municipalities, the improvement of Municipal Audit Performance and implementation of Audit Action Plans;
- And lastly the building and maintenance of sound institutional and administrative capabilities at all levels.

The meeting unanimously agreed to fast track implementation of the Back to Basic programme and committed itself to reviving the MEC / Mayors Quarterly Meetings to provide oversight in the implementation of Operation Clean Audit Action Plan and the Back to Basic Programme of Action. Over and above these meetings we also agreed to convene on a regular basis the Premier Intergovernmental Forum as well as the District Intergovernmental Forums as regulated by the IGR Act.

We have committed ourselves to continuously give support to all municipalities through our various partners such as SALGA, the Office of the Auditor General, the Provincial Treasury, National CoGTA and sector departments. Once more, let me thank you members of the Media for honouring our invitation. We look forward to working closely with you in making local government work better for our people.

Thank You

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