

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY MEC OF COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE, HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS (COGHSTA) MR. BASIKOPO MAKAMU ON THE OCCASION OF THE SALGA LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL MEMBERS ASSEMBLY: POLOKWANE, CAPRICORN DISTRICT**

**Tuesday, 22 November 2022**

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**“Influencing the Local Government Developmental Agenda”**

Programme Director

SALGA Limpopo Provincial Chairperson

SALGA NEC Deployees

SALGA Provincial Executive Committee Members

Kgoshi Malesela Dikgale

Hosi Pheni Ngove

Host Mayor

Executive Mayors, Mayors, Speakers, Chief Whips, MPAC Chairpersons

Acting Chief Executive Officer and SALGA National Officials

Provincial Operations Director

Municipal Managers, Senior Managers from Member Municipalities

Delegates from Provincial Government and Key Stakeholders

Good Morning

Let us rise to observe a moment of silence in the memory of the late Provincial Deputy Chairperson of SALGA and Mayor of Collins Chabane local municipality, Moses “Big Moss” Maluleke, who succumbed to a hail of bullets from criminals who also wounded his 18 years old son.

May His Soul Rest in Eternal Peace.

Amen.

Where South African Local Government Association (SALGA) is today is very different from its humble beginnings as the Northern Province Local Government Association (NPLGA). This was the interregnum between the official recognition of organised local government as envisaged by Section 163 of the Constitution and the subsequent enactment of the Organised Local Government Act, OLGA for short.

Since then a happened towards local government transformation – the White Paper on Local Government was adopted as a guide to the local government transformation agenda, followed by a myriad of legislation that gave us the local government that we have today.

To consolidate local government and plug the gaps in the capacity of local government to fulfil its constitutional obligations, the national executive council adopted the District Development Model for a coordinated and integrated approach to the execution of its mandate.

As in the title of the epic autobiography of the father of our freedom and democracy, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, it has been a long walk to freedom.

This watershed Provincial Members Assembly convenes under the profound theme:

**“Influencing the Local Government Developmental Agenda.”**

The sense of urgency that SALGA carries in its mandate manifests in the PMA’s focus on key issues affecting local government which among others including the following:

- Energy Transition
- Cyber Risk and Digitisation
- Spatial Planning
- Rural Development

- Institutionalizing LED
- Professionalizing Local Government
- Impact on Coalition Governments
- Improving Waste Management
- Impact of Municipal Staff Regulation Implementation

These key issues are at the heart of SALGA's quest of influencing the local government developmental agenda, which is consistent with that of the other spheres of government.

Issues on the agenda of the Provincial Members Assembly are issues that if successfully tackled will turn around local government and enhance its capacity to meet obligations allocated to it by the Constitution of the Republic.

The energy challenges of the country require a comprehensive search for alternative sources of energy. Local government as the sphere at the coalface of service delivery must be in the thick of things in this long overdue search for alternative sources of energy.

Other issues at the hub of a capable local government that will enjoy the scrutiny of delegates are professionalising local government and the impact of Municipal Staff Regulation Implementation.

In the era when political parties generally struggle to attain outright electoral victories in municipalities, coalitions have become a significant feature of our democratic dispensation. Instead of ensuring stable governance in hung municipalities, coalitions have been the cause of much instability we are experiencing in Joburg, Ekurhuleni, Nelson Mandela Bay and elsewhere in the country.

It is in the context of the instabilities in the above metros and elsewhere that the impact of coalition governments features in the PMA agenda.

South Africa has seen an increase in the number of "hung municipalities – upwards of 60 in the last elections on 1 November 2022 – where no party has won with an outright majority to govern alone, thus paving the way for coalitions to constitute municipal

councils. Coalitions are a natural part of a multiparty democracy, and as we mature as a country, we should embrace this system, as we are likely to see more of them.

The challenge facing us is how we stabilise coalition governments.

We all remember the tragedy of the low voter turnout of the 1 November 2021 local government elections, which political commentators pronounced as a vote of no confidence in the current political dispensation. Hung municipalities with no outright electoral victors, are a consequence of low turnout at the municipal polls.

Fewer voters turned out at the voting stations, this was the case notwithstanding the massive campaigning by political parties and independent candidates.

The major lesson we picked from the low voter turnout of the 2021 municipal elections, is that rhetoric and glossy posters no longer attract voters to the polls as it did at the dawn of freedom and democracy, and a few elections thereafter. In this era, voters want solid service delivery to move them to the polls.

Service delivery will be a major factor in the national and provincial elections in 2024. This calls on all stakeholders to put all hands on deck and make local government rise to its constitutional obligations.

Research, intelligence report and casual observation show the problems of water as the instigator of much of the discontent in communities across the province. To stem this tide of discontent water services authorities, working with water utilities, the Department of Water and Sanitation, and the provincial government, must stabilise water supply to communities in the short to medium term as we seek permanent and sustainable solutions.

A professional and well-capacitated local government bureaucracy is essential for the delivery of efficient and effective public goods and services to local communities. It is opportune that your PMA will bring under the spotlight the professionalization of local government, a subject that has been with us since the dawn of democracy and the extension of municipalities to every part of the country.

What confronts us today is how we translate the rhetoric of the professionalization of local government to practice. In a highly competitive world where municipalities operate, professionalism is the predictor of success.

The current local government administration after the 2021 municipal elections went to great lengths in the professionalization of local government by filling vacancies with skilled and experienced candidates. Engaging skilled and experienced personnel gives municipalities a head start in the quest to professionalise local government.

During the course of this PMA, SALGA Limpopo will confer awards on members, past and present, and partners, who have distinguished themselves in their chosen paths and lifelong commitment to local government. The late SALGA Limpopo deputy chairperson and Mayor of Collins Chabane local municipality, Cllr. Moses “Big Moss” Maluleke befittingly receives a posthumous award.

It is worth noting that four former leaders of SALGA are Members of Premier Stanley Chupu Mathabatha’s Executive Council, the cherry on top is that all four of them are women.

There you have it; SALGA Limpopo almost runs the provincial government!

I wish you a fruitful Provincial Members Assembly.

Thank you.