

**ADDRESS BY MEC OF COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE, HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS MR BASIKOPO MAKAMU ON THE LAUNCH OF THE COUNCILLOR INDUCTION PROGRAMME (CIP): VIRTUAL (ZOOM)**

**Monday, 06 December 2021**

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**“WORKING TOGETHER TO BUILD BETTER COMMUNITIES”**

Chairperson of Limpopo SALGA Cllr Pule Shai and Provincial Executive Committee

Executive Mayors and Local Mayors

MMCs and EXCO Members

Speakers

Chief Whips

Newly Elected Councillors

SALGA Provincial Director of Operations, Mme Ledile Sebati

Sector Departments

Good Morning

Greetings to our other colleagues where induction is taking place in Bolivia Lodge for the Capricorn District Municipality, Landmark Lodge for Lepelle Nkumpi, Hotel @Tzaneen for The Greater Tzaneen Municipality, Black Aloe Resort for the Sekhukhune District Municipality, Forever Resort Bela Bela for Ephraim Mogale Municipality, Loskop Dam Aventura for Elias Motsoaledi Municipality, Waterberg district Municipality are at their offices, Bela Bela Municipality are at Forever Resort in Bela Bela, Lephalale Municipality are at Mulalatau Lodge, Mokgalakwena Municipality are at Oasis Motel, Modimolle-Mookgopong are at OR Tambo Hall, Thabazimbi Municipality at Africa Lodge, Collins Chabane Municipality at Tzanene Country Lodge.

We are from the most gruelling municipal election since the inaugural municipal elections in 1995. Those of you who are participating in this Integrated Councillor Induction Programme (ICIP) starting today are the few chosen from the many who called to serve but could not make it.

I therefore plead with you not to take your calling as councillors for granted, ignore the needs of your communities and even move to suburbs.

Let me share the general critique of the 1 November 2021 Municipal Actions.

The Independent Electoral Commission in Limpopo led by the Provincial Electoral Officer Mme Nkaro Mateta and her team delivered a free and fair election.

Two occurrences however blot our otherwise clean electoral copy as revealed by the Provincial Electoral Officer Mme Mateta on the closing of the Provincial Results Centre and announcement of results – low voter turnout and unacceptably high number of spoilt ballots.

The voter turnout for the 2021 elections is lower than 2016! More than 55% of the 2 585m voters on the Limpopo segment of the Voters Roll did not vote, leaving voter turnout at 44,42%.

Our figure for spoilt votes is stands worryingly at 41, 422 or 1.81% for Local Proportional Representation and Ward Ballots combined. Out of 1 127 330 votes cast for the District ballots, a massive 25 612 were spoilt.

Mopani accounts for 6 574 of the spoilt ballots in the province. Ephraim Mogale and Lepelle Nkumpi account for 2.71% and 2.54 spoilt ballots for the local municipalities respectively.

The IEC has further reported that in total 17 095 votes were spoilt for the Ward Ballot and 24 327 for the PR Local Ballot across all Local Municipalities.

According to the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) report cited by the IEC, voters who are eligible to vote do not vote for several reasons including mistrust of political parties and service delivery concerns. In other cases, voters believe that their vote will not make a difference.

The phenomenon of spoilt ballots is as old as our democratic dispensation. It occurs because of the ignorance of some voters, particularly the old infirm.

The wellbeing and legitimacy of our young democracy hangs on a high voter turnout and minimal spoilt ballots. Your work during the term will have a bearing on voter turnout and spoilt ballots.

Do not drop the ball and undermine the confidence of the people in the democratic dispensation.

The Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional (COGHSTA) has handover reports for the 5<sup>th</sup> Administration of Local Government for each of our Municipalities. We are proud that we are handing over to you solid municipal administrations. Out of the twenty-seven municipalities in the province, fifteen received unqualified audit outcomes and one Capricorn District then under Executive Mayor John Mpe received a clean audit. Make us proud and improve these audit outcomes by giving the province more clean audits.

The agenda of the democratic government as enshrined in the National Development Plan is to build a capable and developmental state.

South Africa needs to be “a capable and developmental state: capable in that it has the capacity to formulate and implement policies;

developmental in that those policies focus on overcoming the root causes of poverty and inequality and building the state's capacity to fulfil this role.”

The selection of councillor-candidates and the designation of Mayors and council committee members has moved to capacity and experiences. We put our best foot forward for the current municipal administration.

Our people deserve better and it is your duty to deliver better and sustainable services.

In the quest to build a capable and developmental local government, the South African Local Government Association and COGHSTA have developed a comprehensive 5-Day Councillor Induction Programme that kicks off today.

The objective of the programme is to give you the capacity and tools to hit the ground running.

This comprehensive programme covers the following core areas of municipal governance:

- Leadership
- Policy and Legislation
- Municipal Governance
- Municipal Role Players and Stakeholders
- Municipal Procedures and Protocol
- Municipal Planning and Strategy
- Municipal Performance and Accountability
- Political Party engagement with Elected Councillors

After this intensive programme, you will be as ready as you can be to assume your responsibilities with the full confidence of veteran local government practitioners.

What is missing from the programme however, are communications and personal financial management.

Communication, though mostly ignored and underfunded, is an important component of governance. If you do not communicate it, it has not happened. Public representatives must be equipped with interview, public speaking, speechwriting and social media skills.

We do not want our public representatives to fall foul of the South African Revenue Services or face an uncertain future at the end of their terms of office. A programme in personal financial management will equip councillors to have their finances in order and to prosper.

This Councillor Induction Programme is not a once off training intervention. Specialized training in various functions of the municipality – finances, MPAC, Local Economic Development, Human Resources Management, Information Technology and others will follow soon hereafter.

You will attend conferences, seminars, workshops and exposure visits as part of your ongoing capacity building.

We expect you to be experts at the end of the council term who can easily move into administration, lecture in universities, and write books on local government, become commentators and analysts in local government, and become consultants on local government.

Pursue your personal studies to increase your career prospects. The world is becoming complex and needs high-level skills to navigate. MEC Namane Masemola has shown us that you can be super-busy and still score a PHD. Be like him and make education fashionable.

We go into the festive season as South African scientists have just detected a new COVID-19 variant Omicron described as horrific and as the worst variant ever seen.

This new development on the COVID-19 front calls for maximum vigilance from all South Africans and the observance of the tried and tested protocols of sanitizing, wearing masks in public and social distancing.

I know we can rely on you to deliver the message of the new variant to communities across the province. As we educate communities on the new variant and encourage them to practice the three COVID-19 protocols, let us further encourage them to vaccinate to take us closer to herd immunity.

As President Cyril Ramaphosa said in his address last night on progress in the national effort to contain the COVID-19 pandemic:

**Every one of us has a role to play.**

**We will not be defeated by this pandemic.**

**We have already started learning to live with it.**

**We will endure, we will overcome and we will thrive.**

Another pandemic confronting the country is the Gender Based Violence. Violence against women and children is out of control. Women and children fear to walk our streets because they are not safe.

This year's 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children launched under the theme, "The Year of Charlotte Manny Maxeke: Moving from awareness to accountability."

We will meet again at cooperative governance forums like MUNIMEC, MPAC, Speakers Forum, SALGA Provincial Assembly and Premier Intergovernmental Forum as part of your continuing education.

We can now officially say the election season is over and the hard work of serving the people of Limpopo has started in earnest.

All hands on deck for improved service delivery.

**WORKING TOGETHER TO BUILD BETTER COMMUNITIES**

I thank you.