

Opening Address by MEC of CoGHSTA, Mr. Basikopo Makamu, at the Department Quarterly 2024/25 Performance Review Session

Date: Tuesday, 10 December 2024

Venue: Bolivia Lodge, Polokwane

“Houses. Security. Comfort.”

Acknowledgments

Good morning to all present.

I extend my warm greetings and gratitude to the Head of Department, Dr. Malahlela; the Executive; Senior Management Services; our dedicated staff; and representatives of organized labour. Together, you form the backbone of this department, and I thank you for your unwavering commitment to delivering on our mandate.

As we gather here to review our performance, I am reminded of the profound wisdom of Nelson Mandela:

"It always seems impossible until it is done."

These words remind us that the challenges we face are surmountable through collective determination and action.

Introduction

Colleagues,

We convene today at a critical juncture. While we acknowledge our achievements, we must confront the pressing challenges that threaten to undermine our progress. The crisis in Thabazimbi serves as a stark reminder of the consequences of inaction and inadequate oversight. What started as invisible interventions ultimately culminated in a situation that demanded drastic provincial intervention.

Similarly, the brewing tensions in Musina and elsewhere must not be ignored. These situations, if left unchecked, have the potential to explode in our faces, much like Thabazimbi. Let us use this platform to refine our strategies, ensuring that no community feels abandoned or underserved.

Human Settlements: Building Sustainable Communities

I am pleased to report that Dr. Malahlela, Deputy Director-General Makamu, and I recently represented Limpopo at the 12th World Urban Forum (WUF12) in Cairo, Egypt. Held under the theme **“It All Starts at Home: Local Actions for Sustainable Cities and Communities,”** the forum highlighted the importance of housing and local action in building sustainable futures.

We left Egypt inspired, with valuable lessons and experiences that we hope to integrate into our human settlement programmes. We were also privileged to be led by our former Minister of Human Settlements, Ms. Mmamoloko Kubayi, who headed Team South Africa with distinction. Minister Kubayi’s leadership at WUF12 showcased the strides our country is making in the human settlements sector.

On Saturday, Minister Kubayi, as the Patron of her foundation, demonstrated her commitment to community upliftment by donating six fully equipped and reticulated boreholes with Jojo tanks to provide water security in rural areas. These contributions are a testament to the spirit of Ubuntu that should guide all our efforts.

As we take leave of Minister Kubayi, we are excited to welcome Minister Thembu Simelane to lead the Human Settlements portfolio. As the song by Bayete and Jabu Khanyile says, **“Thath’ umkhayo lo,”** we are receiving one of our own. Minister Simelane is a seasoned leader whose illustrious career spans roles as Executive Mayor of Polokwane, President of SALGA, and Deputy Minister of CoGTA, Minister of CoGTA, and Minister of Justice.

Her leadership comes at a time when the human settlements sector is grappling with underperformance, leading to significant delays in the completion of Community Residential Units (CRUs). These delays have not only disrupted service delivery but also resulted in the loss of allocations, as funds have been returned to the national department.

We must seize this moment to draw from the insights gained at WUF12 and channel them into accelerating our housing programmes. As Mahatma Gandhi once said:

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

Let us dedicate ourselves to addressing the housing needs of our people with renewed vigour and focus.

Traditional Affairs: Stabilizing Leadership Structures

The area of Traditional Affairs continues to present perennial challenges, particularly concerning leadership disputes. The instability within the three Kingdoms of Vha-Venda, Balobedu and Bapedi, has disrupted inaugurations, with some events proceeding under heavy police guard. This is an unacceptable situation that tarnishes the dignity of traditional leadership in our province.

We remain committed to supporting traditional leaders in resolving these disputes. Our approach will include mediation, collaboration with affected communities, and leveraging the expertise of the Traditional

Leadership Investigating Committee. These structures are critical to fostering social cohesion and preserving our cultural heritage.

It is imperative that we work together to stabilize these institutions, ensuring that traditional leadership serves as a pillar of unity and progress.

Performance and Prospects: Building Momentum

Despite our challenges, I am heartened by the prospects of significantly improving our performance. The resolutions adopted during our August and September sessions have provided a robust foundation for progress. These include addressing findings by Internal Audit and the Auditor-General, finalising our Strategic Plan 2025-2030, and mainstreaming the work of Community Development Workers into government programmes.

Our goal is clear: to achieve a clean audit and deliver measurable results to the people of Limpopo. To achieve this, we must adopt a data-driven approach, ensuring that performance information is accurate, verifiable, and actionable.

Peter Drucker once said:

"What gets measured gets managed."

Let us measure our efforts meticulously and manage our resources effectively to achieve our targets.

Key Areas of Focus for Presentations

1. Achievements and Corrective Measures

- Highlight Q2 accomplishments and set actionable corrective measures for underperformance.

2. Target Delivery Progress

- Provide updates on Q3 targets and strategies for achieving them within stipulated timelines.

3. Performance Verification

- Discuss management strategies to ensure performance information is reliable and transparent.

4. Risk Mitigation

- Present robust strategies to mitigate risks and pre-empt crises.

5. Resolution of Audit Findings

- Report on progress in addressing findings by Internal Audit and the AGSA.

6. Input from Organized Labour

- Value the insights and contributions of organized labour in shaping our path forward.

Conclusion and Call to Action

Colleagues,

The work before us is immense, but so is our collective capacity to deliver. Let us approach our tasks with a sense of urgency and purpose, remembering that every action we take has a direct impact on the lives of our people.

As Albert Einstein wisely noted:

"In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity."

Let us find the opportunities within our challenges, turning them into stepping stones for progress.

I look forward to a productive session, rich with insights, solutions, and actionable resolutions. Together, we can ensure that the Department of CoGHSTA remains a beacon of hope and a catalyst for change in Limpopo.

Thank you.

End of Address