

Executive Mayor's Opening Address: Inter-governmental Relations Forum held at the Hotel at Tzaneen on the 11th of September 2018.

Mayors present here

Speaker of Mopani District Municipality and all other Speakers present

Chief Whips

Members of the Mayoral Committee and Executive Committees

Our Traditional Leaders

Municipal Managers

Acting PEO of SALGA

CEOs of our Chapter 9 Institutions, such as the IEC and Auditor General

CEOs of all State-owned agencies

Hospital CEOs

Representatives from Sector Departments

Government communicators

Allow me to start by congratulating Mayor Maripe Mangena and the rest of the community of Greater Tzaneen Municipality for the runner-up position in the National Greenest Town Competition.

We also want to take this opportunity to congratulate General Maggy Mathebula from the SAPS Tzaneen, Cluster for winning the award for the Best Tracking Team in the province. This award is from Tracker SA, in recognition of the work done by this Team in recovering stolen and hijacked vehicles.

We wish to express our deep appreciation to this team that continues to put their lives at risk in a bit to ensure the safety of our people in Mopani and the province at large.

We need to appreciate this work in the context that, the reduced level of contact crime does improve investor confidence, trust and willingness to invest in our towns. But what is important to note is that we have a responsibility as government to ensure that our people are not only safe, but do feel safe.

Ladies and gentlemen

September is celebrated as Heritage Month, and the Theme for this year is:

“The Year of Nelson Mandela: Advancing Transformation of South Africa’s Heritage Landscape.” The Heritage Month Celebration takes place on the

backdrop of the Centenary Celebrations of Nelson Mandela and Mama

Albertina Sisulu. The words of Nelson Mandela at the Rivonia Trial which took place in 1963, should inspire the work of this forum. Faced with the prospect of lifetime in jail and possible death, he said:

“During my lifetime I have dedicated my life to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons will live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal for which I hope to live for and it see realised. But, my Lord if it needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.”

Ladies and gentlemen

We meet here in the third quarter of 2018, but also the end of the first quarter in the municipal cycle for 2018/19 financial year.

One of the key pillars of the National Development Plan is the building of a capable and developmental state. Better coordination between the three spheres of government becomes vital in our efforts of fighting the triple challenges of unemployment, poverty and equality.

The work of this forum has its firm foundation in the Constitution of the Country, Act 108 of 1996. Chapter 3 of the Constitution sets out principles that guide the interaction of the three spheres of government. The Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act of 2005 outlines the roles of intergovernmental forums at all levels.

The democratic government has since 1994, made significance progress in changing the lives of our people. We have a responsibility to ensure that our work as different spheres of government speak to each to other at all times.

We last met at this level in April 2018, and a number of resolutions were taken by this forum. We must take advantage of today's meeting to reflect on the progress made in the implementation of the Medium Term Strategic Framework as well as previous resolutions made at this level.

We are seeing almost all municipalities in our district recording 100% successes in terms of appointment of senior managers, which is one of the key performance areas for the Back to Basics approach.

We have recently held a two-day ward committee conference at Karibu, and we have all spoken in one voice and said in that conference that our engagements with communities must not be limited to the quarterly meetings and the IDP/budget public participation processes.

It is a constitutional imperative for local government to engage and involve citizens on matters of governance.

We are not doing our communities any favour when we engage with them. In setting out the objects of local government, the Constitution of the Republic, directs that local government should encourage the involvement of communities and community organizations in matters of local government.

The Imbizo approach is a good platform for us to interact with our communities to get to know of their challenges, but it also presents an opportunity for us to communicate our plans to these communities. We cannot be going to these Imbizos alone as municipalities. We must walk hand in hand to these meetings, so that collectively we can be able to report back to our people the great work and plans of government to deliver a better for life for all.

We must also intensify our sectoral outreaches. We need to engage with key stakeholders within our communities, to keep them abreast on key policy positions of government. The issue of land expropriation without compensation can easily be used by counter-revolutionary forces to turn our people against us. It is during these sectoral outreaches that we will be able to assure our traditional leaders that expropriation will not target land in the trusteeship of our traditional leaders. Land expropriation will not be implemented in a way that will tamper with food security.

Ladies and gentlemen

We will be going to the National General Elections in less than eleven months from now, and it now becomes more important than ever for us to improve on how we interact with each other as the three spheres of government.

Let me also appreciate the significant strides that have been made by some local municipalities, in ensuring that we have operational Thusong Service Centres in our district. The centres are an important point of service delivery contact hence as the district municipality, local municipalities and sector departments we need to join hands and double our efforts to make them to be fully operational. In order for this to be achieved there is a need for us to make sure that there is ICT connectivity at these Thusong Service Centres. We need to find solutions to assist centres that have proper infrastructure, but we do not have departments rendering services from such centres. We have SASSA, the police, but we do not have Home Affairs rendering services from the Mokwakwaila Thusong Service Centre and this disadvantages our communities, as this is a key service delivery department. These centres serve as an effective means of bringing information and services closer to our people, but also can also serve as a platform to enhance participatory democracy.

As much as we are advocating for ICT-connectivity at Thusong Service Centres, we must also ensure that there is free WI-FI access at all our municipal offices, government hospitals and also at all other government buildings. This will help government officials to play a vital role in ensuring that there is an accelerated service delivery and reduce the waiting period by communities who visit our offices to seek services.

We have seen significant improvement on the management of long queues at the Tzaneen Home Affairs Office, and we applaud management of Home Affairs in responding to that issue.

We also need to appreciate the work done through the Speaker's Forums to assist the IEC in their Voter Address Harvesting Campaign.

The ward committees are playing an important role, and we need to find ways of encouraging them to work with the IEC to meet the November deadline.

SASSA representatives will have to give us an update on the issue of the transition and taking over the function by the South African Post Office, from Cash Paymaster Services on the payment of social grants, and the process of rolling out the new SASSA cards. This forum may need to reflect on the progress, and interventions that have been made at this level.

Government communicators must form part of the District IGR forum and assist in profiling its work. We urge district government communicators to organize themselves and ensure that there is functional district communicators forum that meets regularly. I have since received an assurance from the team in Mopani District Municipality that this matter will be attended to.

Ladies and gentlemen

The Mopani District Municipality will be hosting a Water Summit on Friday, the 14th of September 2018. We will have an opportunity to interact with various role players on how best we can improve water provision to our people. As the district municipality we will also use the Water Summit to highlight the significance progress that we have made in ensuring that our communities get consistent supply of water.

I wish you a successful engagement at this forum. Together we move Mopani forward.

God bless you and God bless the people of Mopani.