

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF MOPANI DISTRICT
MUNICIPALITY COUNCILLOR NKAKARENG RAKGOALE DURING THE
OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE DISTRICT LOCAL ECONOMIC FORUM HELD
ON THE 06TH OF JULY 2017 AT KARIBU LEISURE RESORT

Program Director

Speakers

Chief Whips

MMC's and EXCO members

Councillors

Traditional Leaders

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

I am highly elated to be the one addressing you as we launch our District Local Economic Development (LED) Forum. According to the World Bank, Local Economic Development is the process by which the public, business and NGOs work collectively to create better conditions for the economic growth and employment creation. Therefore all our planning efforts, starting from the spatial development framework which largely informs our arch plan which is the IDP, seeks to bring all sectors of government to improve living conditions of our people. I am certain that this forum is aware of the gravitas of the responsibility that it is faced with.

Program Director

Since 1994, SA has been faced with the challenges of reintegration into world markets as a global economy, while at the same time positioning itself to realise the high expectations of its populace regarding a successful transition towards a more democratic order. To achieve the objectives of economic growth through competitiveness on the one hand, and employment generation and income redistribution as a result of this growth on the other, has brought a lot of sense to Local Economic Development. There has always been a general consensus that through harnessing of LED strategies, small micro medium enterprises (SMME) economy and a well-informed spatial planning, local economies can unlock the broader economic potential of this country in order to address the structural challenges such as unemployment, inequality and poverty. However you will agree with me that we still need rigorous local economic development strategies which will also be thoroughly monitored and evaluated in order to ensure that our local economic growth reaches its international competitiveness and epic heights. Our spatial analysis contained in our IDP indicates that illegal occupation and unsustainable use of land is still one of the major challenges for development in our district. It deepens our communities into unacceptable living conditions while on the other hand it pressurise government to do damage control type of delivery instead of working on a properly planned development.

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Ladies and gentlemen

A superficial glance at the available statistics suggests that Mopani District has one of Limpopo's most developed economies. Our GDP per Capita is above R20 000 which is a little higher than the provincial average.

However, these aggregated statistics conceal the fact that our economic activities are highly concentrated in Baphalaborwa and to a lesser extent Greater Tzaneen. Outside of these two local municipalities, Mopani have one of the country's less developed and poorest communities. As we all know, the main drivers of our economy is mining and agriculture. Unemployment is still a major challenge that we need to face head on. The persisting unemployment patterns in our district need us to go back and ask ourselves earnest questions as to what should be the role of local economic development in job creation. Once we have answered that question we will need to thoroughly look at some of the challenges which have for years limited our roles in playing a meaningful role in our local economic development responsibilities and also creating conducive environment for job createion. Some of these challenges include but not limited to:

- Weak planning departments
- Poor coordination between the spheres of government
- Weak planning departments
- Weak LED units
- Lack of implementation of LED strategies

- Misaligning of plans between different sphere of government
- Lack of technical expertise to drive LED programs

These issues and others which we might still be identified need to be thoroughly addressed so that we can play meaningful role in developing the economy of our district. This LED forum that we are launching here today is well placed to correctly assist us in dealing with some of these challenges and also identifying other challenges which are limiting our development potential.

Furthermore, our desire to contribute immensely to Local Economic Development must also inform our planning even in the future. Our infrastructure planning must be informed by a Spatial Development Framework. In this sense, we must always ensure among others that the infrastructure master plan is aligned to LED plans and SDF, and also ensure that there is a clear link between Municipal Infrastructure Grant and the local economic development strategy.

I believe that this forum, since it is made out of both government and civil society organisation will go a long way in assisting us on dealing with some of these challenges I have mentioned above. My confidence is based on the fact that key among others, the objectives of the establishment of this LED forum is;

- To have a structured forum with internal and external representatives that will engage as a Forum with strategic approach on planning issues,

- To create common understanding on planning matters,
- To provide a consultative platform for all planning matters
- Oversees the planning process.
- Advice and make recommendation on municipality planning matters, such as
 - The IDP
 - Spatial Development Framework
 - Town planning plans and policies
 - Land issues
 - Local Economic Development issues as raised by LED Strategy

I wish this forum all the best in discharging its expected responsibilities. I believe that this forum will complement well the work of various government entities in setting us in a growth trajectory within our district.

I thank you!