

**An opening address by the Executive Mayor of Mopani District  
Municipality, Her Worship Nkakareng Rakgaole during the District's  
Strategic Session held Makgoebaskloof Hotel in the Greater  
Tzaneen Municipality**

**13 August 2018.**

**Speaker of Council, Councillor Wireless Sedibeng**

**Chief Whip, Mme Martha Maswanganyi**

**Members of the Mayoral Committee in Mopani**

**Honourable Councillors from our District Municipality**

**Municipal Manager, Mr Republic Monakedi**

**Directors and all officials present here**

**Traditional leaders present here**

**Representatives of both the Premier's Office and COGHSTA**

**Our facilitator**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is a great pleasure for me to be with you here today.

We have said to our communities in 2016, that **"Together advancing people's power in every community. Local government is in your hands."**

We have now been in office for just over two years, and we may need to pause and reflect on the questions posed by the Founding Father of our democracy, Tata Nelson Mandela during his address to the National Summit for organized local government.

“Every councillor needs to ask: ***‘Have I made a difference to the quality of life of the people? How successful have we been over the past year in delivering essential services to residents, such as sanitation? Have we been able to deliver water and to mend the leaking pipes and the broken meters? Have we been able to bring services to the informal settlements and the rural areas?’***

Our people had no reason to doubt us when we said we remain steadfast in our commitment to create a better life for all. They gave us a mandate to lead local government for five years, and our meeting here today should best serve to check progress made on the implementation of the 2016 mandate, and areas of improvement going into the 2018/19 financial year.

Local government derives its mandate from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, which states that local government has to achieve the following:

- Provide democratic and accountable government for local communities.
- Ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner.
- Promote social and economic development.
- Promote a safe and healthy environment.
- Encourage involvement of communities and community organisations on matters of local government.

Programme director

Gathered here are the women and men who have been given the responsibility by the people of the Mopani District Municipality, to give effect to the vision of a better life for all.

It is through the Mopani District Municipality and all its five locals that the needs and aspirations of our people are most directly addressed. We are actually an institution of Local Government that is in direct contact with our communities who needs the provision of basic services.

As the political leadership of the institution, Directors, representatives from the Provincial Government and officials we must use this two-day strategic planning session to stop and reflect on strides that we have made to better the lives of our communities. We must be able to take pride on the successes that we have achieved for the previous months. Equally we must truly reflect on the failures that we had. Our interaction at this level must reflect our commitment to meet the expectations of our people whose hopes and aspirations resides exclusively in this government.

We must use this session to discuss how best we are to implement recommendations from our water summit, the economic summit and the ward committee conference held this year. We did not convene those gatherings for the fun of it or for compliance. The people of our district spoke, and the best we can do is to ensure that we align those resolutions to our plans going forward.

Council has previously resolved on the imposing of water restrictions across the five local municipalities due to drought. The levels at ten of our major dams are significantly lower as compared to the same time last year. This session must respond explicitly on how we shall deliver consistent supply of water to our people during this period.

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is at a local level that the transformation of our district is made visible, where improvements in the quality of the life of the people of Mopani District is made to manifest. During his address to the SALGA National Assembly held at Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre in Ethekewini on Tuesday this week, President Cyril Ramaphosa has said that, and I quote:

***“where local government leads, South Africa follows. When it comes to our country’s development, local government is the difference between failure and success.”***

The point am driving home is that this gathering is vitally important in our district calendar, as it offers management and the political leadership to self-correct on matters of administration that have not been properly handled.

The National Development Plan says that developmental local government is central to the eradication of poverty and the reduction of unemployment by 2030. However, as the NDP notes, the district municipality often found that these expectations exceed our administrative and financial ability.

Program Director

It is during this strategic planning session where we are supposed to make sure that we come up with ways of developing strategies, that will see improved service delivery to our communities. Directors present here have a full responsibility of ensuring that there is perfection in the manner in which they are carrying out their daily duties. The performance of all our directorates

must speak directly to our service delivery drive. People must feel the positive impact of the work we are doing.

I want to take this opportunity and congratulate the Greater Letaba and Ba-Phalaborwa Municipalities for their improved audit outcomes for the 2017/18 financial year. Am told that the Greater Letaba obtained an unqualified audit outcome, while the Ba-Phalaborwa municipality obtained a qualified audit outcome. We have an adverse finding as a district municipality, and the session is best placed to reflect on that finding. As Council we have gone out of our way to create an enabling environment for improved performance. We have filled all posts for senior management. This session though, must note my appreciation on improved spending on grants.

Program Director

But I must say that as the Mopani District Municipality, we must work very hard to ensure that we also do our best in improving the manner in which we are handling our finances and financial records at large.

The issue of institutional performance, and the issue of positive audit outcomes cannot be over emphasised. We certainly need to punch beyond our weight to ensure that our planning assist us to overcome this challenge of negative audit outcomes.

Clearly the audit outcomes are not pleasing and there is a need for radical turnaround approach to manage the public purse. According to the Auditor General some issues that are neglected in our institutions are.

- . Asset management
- . Poor records management
- . Lack of internal controls

## . Non-compliance with supply chain management

There is a popular quote whose author is unknown which says, “Action without planning is fatal, planning without action is futile.” As much as it is important to sit for these kind of sessions, it is only the implementation of the outcomes which will determine whether we are moving forward.

I want to issue a stern warning against management and indicate that poor performance will not go unnoticed. It is high time that Directors and other managers who will be found to have failed this institution, be held accountable. We must all note that poor performance of a municipality will ultimately result into service delivery being compromised.

Program Director

Perhaps it will be prudent for this session to pause and reflect on the road travelled since the last strategic planning session which was held at Blyde in 2017. As we start with this strategic planning session, let us approach it with an open mind, fully trusting that we will come out of here stronger and wiser.

We have raised our concerns as political leadership, during the last session in Blyde around the functionality of the district IGR. Seating here, this session must reflect on progress made in resuscitating that crucial forum, including the functionality of technical committees.

The IDP remains our tool for improving the lives of our people, and there is no way it cannot be linked to the Medium Term Strategic Framework of government which largely informed by the National Development Plan.

Indeed, solutions for growth and development emerge from frank and open discussions on platforms such as this, where we can allow ourselves to reflect on the journey of development and even be critical about performance so that we do not become complacent, but rather continue to improve our capabilities as we go on our journey of deepening people's power as we move our district forward. With these few words, I wish you all a fruitful and a successful session.

I thank you.