

Closing Remarks by the Chief Whip of the NCOP, Hon. Mr. S J Mohai (MP) during the Workshop on Cooperative Governance and Intergovernmental Relations on 1 and 2 February 2022

2 February 2022

Honourable Chairperson, we have come to the close of this important Workshop on Cooperative Governance and Intergovernmental Relations.

Allow me to express our profound appreciation and gratitude to all the speakers and presenters for their affluent presentations and profound suggestions.

We are truly extremely indebted to the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Honourable Dr. N C Dlamini-Zuma, MP for always availing herself to assist us to enrich the work of our Council, particularly in our efforts to seek better ways to fulfil our Council's mandate of representing provinces and their interests.

I would also like to express my profound appreciation to Premier Sihle Zikalala, MEC Mxolisi Dukwana, Mr Thabo Manyoni who is the Chairperson of the Municipal Demarcation Board, The Auditor-General, Ms. Tsakane Maluleke, Professor Chris Tapscott, Professor Bertus De Villiers, Professor Nico Steytler, Dr. Andrew Siddle, Dr. David Mohale, Dr. Thina Nzo, Ms. Avril Williamson, Ms. Zelna Jansen, Ms Wendy Fanoe and Mr Khululekile Mase.

I am sure that I am speaking on behalf of the entire leadership of the NCOP and the members of the Council that we are extremely delighted to host such a collective of adept, brilliant and accomplished scholars, public representatives and accomplished public servants.

Your continued support and readiness to share your knowledge is a source of great strength to all of us. We are pleased and honoured that we have you as our knowledge reservoir that continues to guide us to improving our systems and processes to ensure the effective representation of provinces and their interests in the national sphere of our government.

Honourable Chairperson, a number of extremely profound propositions and suggestions were made by the various speakers and presenters since yesterday.

Let me from the onset acknowledge the indication by Dr. Dlamini-Zuma that government has started with the process of amending the Public Administration Management Act (PAMA) to facilitate the transfer of skills across spheres of government and institutions to improve operational efficiencies, state capacity and service delivery. This will address a number of concerns that were raised about the lack of capacity in our municipalities and even at provincial level.

Equally, we welcome the announcement that government has recognised the need for an urgent intervention to ensure a professional administration in our municipalities. Many of our members will agree that this is an issue that has been raised in various platforms of the Council, including the previous Local government week where SALGA spoke very sharply about the need to professionalise our local government.

A number of speakers have raised the issue of relooking at the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act of 2005 to clearly articulate the role of the NCOP in fostering cooperative governance and intergovernmental relations.

I am happy that Professor Chris Tapscott explained the importance of the role of the NCOP in approving interventions in our municipalities. We will continue to ensure that this stick, as he put it, remains key and that it is sharpened to strengthen the power of our Council to play a key role in shaping the current state of our municipalities.

Our chairperson

All speakers reaffirmed the precepts of co-operative governance and the fundamental importance of ensuring that all the spheres of government co-ordinate their efforts and work together for the good of the citizens and the country.

Dr. David Mohale and Dr. Thina Nzo spoke at length on the fundamental importance of the various spheres of our government to work together in a cooperative and mutual manner to advance the lives of our people.

Professor Bertus De Villiers and Professor Nico Steytler gave practical policy and legislative premises for the centrality and relevance of the codification of cooperative governance and intergovernmental relations in our governance system for effective delivery of services to communities.

We welcome the suggestions of the Auditor-General and the DG of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs to give coherence and meaning to the Constitutional role of our Council, especially in intervening and ensuring effective financial oversight in our municipalities. We will engage with the Office of the Auditor-General to see how we can assist their work, especially in audit outcomes and public resource management in our municipalities.

Premier Zikalala, MEC Dukwana and Mr Mase shared their lessons and experiences in ensuring cooperation between provinces and municipalities. They also shared with us some of the support systems and measures that they have put in place to support our municipalities and ensure that municipalities in their provinces work together in a mutual way to deliver services to communities.

They also raised the need to strengthen the processes of the NCOP and the manner in which we deal with interventions from provinces to ensure that we are fully vested with the reasons for an intervention and that we play a key role in assisting provinces to monitor the effectiveness of interventions. We must work together to ensure that the process of intervening in provinces in terms of section 100 and in municipalities, especially in terms of section 139 serves to strengthen governance and the delivery of services of communities.

Honourable Chairperson, as I indicated earlier on, numerous suggestions were made. We will move with greater speed and utmost urgency to ensure that this Workshop serves to strengthen the work of the Council and that they are integrated in our work, including possible consideration for possible amendment of laws and policies as suggested and even our rules.

I thank you!