



**SPEAKING NOTES FOR THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES, HONOURABLE A. N. MASONDO, ON THE OCCASION OF THE VIRTUAL MINISTERIAL BRIEFING SESSION ON WATER AND SANITATION DURING THE MARCH-APRIL 2022 PROVINCIAL WEEK**

**PLACE:** VIRTUAL **DATE:** 29 MARCH 2022 **TIME:** 09H00

Programme Director, Deputy Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Honourable Sylvia Lucas

Deputy Minister of Water and Sanitation, Honourable Dikeledi Magadzi

House Chairperson for Committees and Oversight, Honourable Jomo Nyambi

House Chairperson for International Relations and Members' Support, Honourable Winnie Ngwenya

Chief Whip of the NCOP, Honourable Seiso Mohai

Provincial Premiers and Members of the Executive Councils

Members of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures

Representatives of the South African Local Government Association

Mayors and Members of Municipal Councils

Ladies and gentlemen

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Programme Director, after due consideration the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) set aside the week of the 28<sup>th</sup> of March to the 1st of April 2022 for the Provincial Week programme. The programme is being held under the theme *Assessing State Capacity to Respond to the Needs of Communities*.

As we all know, in terms of the Constitution the NCOP represents the provinces to ensure that provincial interests are taken into account in the national sphere of government.

The Provincial Week programme is one of the mechanisms that the NCOP uses to carry out this important mandate.

The historical purpose of the Provincial Week programme has been to give Permanent Delegates an opportunity to return to their provinces, as delegations, to assess the delivery of services to citizens. In this process, they deal directly with a range of matters that affect their provinces, thereby extracting or isolating those matters that are of interest to the provinces.

The focal areas for this week have been selected jointly with the respective provinces. Therefore, the programme will present an opportunity for the NCOP and the Provincial Legislatures, including the Municipal Councils, to conduct integrated oversight.

In doing so, the institutions will be guided by their relevant mandates while also taking advantage of co-operation and collaboration in the interest of advancing the principles of co-operative government and intergovernmental relations.

## **2. THE CONSTITUTIONAL IMPERATIVE TO CO-OPERATE AND CO-ORDINATE**

The Constitution provides clear and progressive principles for the promotion of co-operative government and intergovernmental relations in South Africa. In order to advance this governance philosophy so that it can benefit the citizens, government needs to ensure co-operation and co-ordination in the fulfilment of public duties.

It is through co-operation and co-ordination that we can contribute to effective government which addresses the needs of communities.

In the work that we do, it is also very important that we continue to ensure that the national and provincial governments support and strengthen the capacity of municipalities.

Local government forms part of our overall socio-economic transformation agenda and is the sphere of government closest to the people. In this regard, the District Development Model provides us with a renewed opportunity to establish a joined-up government.

### **3. OVERALL PROGRAMME**

This week's Provincial Week exercise is a high-impact oversight driven programme that focuses on the challenges of state capacity in the provinces. It is also informed by the need to focus our attention on the revival of the economy, following the devastating impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and other sources of the country's sustained economic pressures.

Economic development depends on infrastructure development and the reliable and sustainable resources like water, electricity, roads and transport.

While providing for a nuanced approach, to cater for the needs of each province against this broad perspective, this week's programme also provides for common areas so as to ensure collective effort. One of these is the area of water and sanitation, which is a basic right for South Africans and one which has the potential to enhance human dignity.

#### **4. ON ASSESSING STATE CAPACITY TO RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF COMMUNITIES**

Programme Director, this morning's Ministerial Briefing Session is deliberate in directing us to collectively focus on assessing state capacity to deliver water and sanitation to communities.

As we are all aware, our collective task is to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030. As the National Development Plan (NDP) suggests, we can achieve this:

1. By drawing on the energies of the citizens;
2. By growing an inclusive economy;
3. By building capabilities;
4. By enhancing the capacity of the state; and
5. By promoting leadership and partnerships throughout society.

The NDP proposes a partnership between communities and a capable state. It states further, and I quote:

“A developmental state needs to be capable, but a capable state does not materialise by decree, nor can it be legislated or waved into existence by declarations. It has to be built, brick by brick, institution by institution, and sustained and rejuvenated over time. It requires leadership, sound policies, skilled managers and workers, clear lines

of accountability, appropriate systems, and consistent and fair application of rules”.

During the Ministerial Briefing Session on Water and Sanitation, held on the 15<sup>th</sup> of this month, both the Ministry of Water and Sanitation and the South African Local Government Association outlined some of the challenges being experienced in relation to the provision of water and sanitation. These, they said, include the budget, personnel and skills, particularly in municipalities.

The focus on state capacity is so that we can begin to address these challenges in a manner consistent with the NDP’s Vision 2030.

We welcome the commitment by the Ministry to address the issues that are the root causes of the poor capacity of the state, including dealing with corruption and laying concrete plans to turn around water and sanitation services across the country.

In this regard, we welcome the interventions that the Minister is already making. One example is the recent appointment of the Interim Board of the Amatola Water, in place of the previous board which presided over a series of water disruptions in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, in the Eastern Cape. This is an example of a responsive government.

The task of ensuring that the rights of access to basic water supply and basic sanitation are enjoyed by all South Africans requires demonstrable leadership at the top. It requires leadership that acts to build state capacity.

We are also looking forward to the establishment of the National Water Resources Infrastructure Agency, to improve the management of bulk water infrastructure and resources, as well as the National Water and Sanitation Plan.

## **5. IN CONCLUSION**

Programme Director, the Provincial Week programme is an important mechanism for the fulfilment of the mandate of the NCOP of representing the interests of the provinces. It is an opportunity for Delegates to deal with issues that are critical for the purpose of addressing the needs of communities.

The assessment of state capacity to deliver water and sanitation to communities is key if we are to truly respond to the needs of communities.

I welcome everybody to this session. I invite you to make the best of the opportunity offered by this Provincial Week to undertake work that we have not been able to do for a long time, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. I appeal

to you to use this coming Friday to reflect on the activities and to identify issues that will require the attention of the next Provincial Week.

I thank you