

OPENING REMARKS BY THE LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS AND MEC FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS, MS NOMANTU NKOMO-RALEHOKO DURING THE NCOP PROVINCIAL WEEK HELD ON 11-15 SEPTEMBER 2023

Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces , Hon. Amos Masondo,
The premier of Gauteng, Hon. Panyaza Lesufi
National Ministers & Deputy Ministers,
Members of the Executive Council from Gauteng
Members of NCOP present here today
Mayors, Speakers, Chief Whips,
Senior Leadership from Rand Water and
Senior Government and NCOP officials,

Chairperson and NCOP members, the Premier of Gauteng, already welcomed you and shared the Gauteng's plan to improve the lives of the people of Gauteng through water and sanitation projects.

In executing the role of the Leader of Government Business, it is imperative to emphasize the significance of collaborative and synchronized oversight. This responsibility encompasses a involved approach, ranging from the detailed supervision of government programmes to the adept handling of legislative proceedings. Acting as a vital liaison between the Executive and the Legislature, this duty is to ensure a seamless flow of information and actions.

This critical position not only highlights the state's operational ability but also serves as a basis of support in matters of oversight and legislation. It is worth reiterating that this priority was underscored by the Premier in his opening remarks just yesterday.

Furthermore, this function is instrumental in strengthening the state's overall capacity, establishing a robust framework for effective governance. It provides in-dispensable guidance on matters of oversight and legislative affairs, aligning with our overarching theme: "Building Viable Provincial and Municipal Infrastructure for Effective Delivery of Service-s to Communities." This theme captures our commitment to constructing a strong foundation that enables the efficient provision of essential services to our communities, setting the stage for a prosperous and well-served populace.

Honourable Members, and Colleagues,

The proceedings of yesterday's session have laid bare the un-deniable truth that there is much work yet to be done. Such forums serve as a powerful vessel, where the urgency of our mission is palpable. They remind us of the responsibility we bear to uplift and enhance the lives of our fellow citizens. In these moments, it becomes abundantly clear that now is a time for action, for concerted efforts, and for firm dedication.

The gravity of the situation demands a united front, one forged through collaboration and a shared sense of purpose. It is not a time for political manoeuvring or superficial gestures, but rather a moment that calls for genuine commitment to the well-being of our communities. In this context, I find profound resonance in the words articulated by Honourable Dongo just yesterday. His wisdom cuts to the core of our mission, emphasizing that our gathering is not a platform for casting blame or dwelling on past missteps.

Instead, it is a clarion call to strengthen the bonds of cooperation among the three spheres of government. Through this collective enterprise, we can ensure the seamless and efficient delivery of high-quality services to our people, who are the lifeblood of our shared endeavour.

Chairperson, today's presentations by Rand Water and Sedibeng, elucidating their plans for corrective measures and the rollout of water and sanitation facilities, stand as a evidence to Gauteng's solid commitment to effective governance. Furthermore, under the leadership of MEC COGTA, numerous Memoranda of Understanding have been signed with organizations like Rand Water. Our ongoing support and the establishment of robust engagement platforms with local governments highlight our dedication to this cause.

It is important to indicate that as the Gauteng Executive Council, we diligently conducts regular visits to municipalities, a proactive approach to monitor and assess the progress of water and sanitation projects. This practice stems from our firm belief that water is the essence of life, and sanitation is fundamental in preserving the dignity of our citizens.

In furtherance of our commitment to bolstering local governance, we are honoured to have the Mayor of Sedibeng in our midst today, a proof to our collaborative efforts in this regard.

The state of infrastructure projects in Sedibeng, particularly those pertaining to water and sanitation, is steadily on an upward trajectory, a positive indication of our collective endeavours. The wastewater treatment plant in Emfuleni Local Municipality grapples with critical challenges, with sewer overflow posing significant health risks and underlining maintenance shortcomings.

The collaboration between the Department of Water and Sanitation and Rand Water is a commendable step towards rectification. Their comprehensive approach, focusing on operations, maintenance, infrastructure refurbishment, sustainability, security, and water reclamation, recognizes the multifaceted nature of the issues at hand.

Furthermore, the aging clay pipelines, being a unique challenge, demand innovative solutions for long-term success. It has been determined by the Department of Water and Sanitation in conjunction with Rand Water that a thorough assessment is imperative to decide whether replacement of these clay pipes is warranted. This discerning approach ensures that resources are directed where they will have the most impact, ultimately benefiting the residents and safeguarding their health and well-being.

Despite all these challenges, Emfuleni Local Municipality has made noteworthy progress in tackling water and sanitation challenges.

Both presentations from the Municipality and Rand Water are expected to provide further insight into these successes. The Emfuleni Local Municipality's progress in addressing water and sanitation challenges, including pump station upgrades and wastewater treatment plant enhancements, will be highlighted.

Additionally, Rand Water's collaborative efforts in providing essential equipment and infrastructure upgrades will also be discussed. These presentations will serve as a testament to the substantial strides made in tackling pressing issues and setting a positive course for the future.

Collaborative efforts between Rand Water and Emfuleni Municipality are focused on repurposing upgraded infrastructure for the benefit of other industries and agriculture through water reuse. Short-term interventions are in the pipeline, slated for implementation in the coming months. Additionally, steps are being taken to secure dedicated funding for water and sanitation, ensuring efficient resource allocation for this critical service. Overall, these initiatives reflect significant strides in addressing pressing challenges, setting a positive trajectory for the future

With this in mind, Chairperson, I extend a warm and heartfelt welcome to each and every one of you present here today. As we delve into discussions and presentations, let us keep at the forefront of our minds the communities we serve. Their needs, aspirations, and well-being should guide every decision and initiative we undertake. It is through their trust and confidence that we find our greatest motivation and responsibility.

Furthermore, it is essential that we recognize the interdependence of all facets of infrastructure - from water and sanitation to transportation and energy. By addressing these elements holistically, we not only ensure the smooth functioning of our communities but also lay the groundwork for sustained growth and prosperity.

In closing, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each one of you for your dedication to the betterment of our communities especially the region of Sedibeng. Collectively, we embark on a journey that holds the promise of a brighter future for all. Let us seize this opportunity with determination, creativity, and an unwavering commitment to serve our communities.

Thank you.