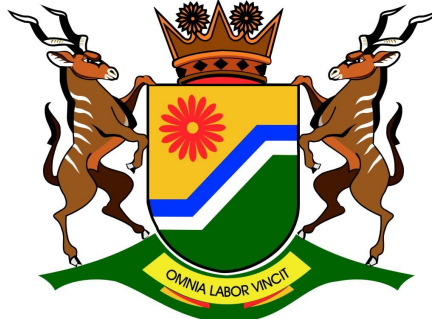


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Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs

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MEDIA RELEASE

MPUMALANGA HOLDS PROVINCIAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT INDABA.

The Mpumalanga Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs has held a two day Provincial Local Government Indaba in Secunda which dealt with issues affecting municipalities across the province, some of which have led to unrests in some municipalities. The Indaba was attended by all stakeholders operating within the sphere of local government.

The Premier, Mr David Mabuza, delivered the keynote Address which was an analysis of the state of local government in the province. He acknowledged that whilst significant progress had been made in bringing a better life for the people, there are still challenges that face local government. He mentioned the fact that some of the challenges in this sphere include inter alia, the lack of highly capacitated human capital to properly execute decision-making, poor financial management and the lack of leadership. 'Councillors in many municipalities are unable to provide leadership and effective oversight over the affairs of the municipalities. A number of municipalities have been placed under administration mainly due to governance failure', said Mabuza. He added that issues of poor performance, poor communication, the social distance between elected leaders and the communities should become the focal points of attention in the effort to turn around the local government system. He further emphasised that government would introduce a number of programmes that will build capacity to

government functionaries but those that continue to perform poorly in their jurisdictional areas of work would be replaced.

Both Premier Mabuza and the MEC for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs Honourable Norman Mokoena agreed that there was a need to radically change the approach of Local government.

Amongst other issues, the Indaba looked at financial viability and management, infrastructure development and basic service delivery, traditional leadership, good governance and community participation and institutional capacity and labour relations. From these deliberations a provincial local government Turnaround Strategy has been developed.

The Indaba reconfirmed that municipalities are a vital cog in the developmental state machinery. It further noted that local government provides the necessary platform for deepening democracy through public participation and engagement with communities on matters affecting development and service delivery.

Amongst other issues the Indaba resolved the following:

- To intensify the public participation process.
- Reconfirms its respect to the rights of individuals to engage in peaceful protests to raise their concern and has called on law enforcement agencies to deal decisively with those that break the law
- That all departments, state owned enterprises and government employees to pay all outstanding municipal accounts immediately. It further resolved to craft and implement a programme of debt and revenue management
- To improve the finance systems (billing, assets management etc), review the supply chain management regime, filling of all critical vacant posts in finance units by 2011 and strengthening the internal and external audit structures.
- The provincial Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs and Provincial Treasury to lead a process of financial turnaround strategy for local government supported by the National Department Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs and National Treasury.
- To enforce the Performance Management and Development system in all municipalities in 2010/11 and fill all critical vacant posts and immediately conduct a skills audit for the top four and ensure that suitable qualified individuals are attracted and retained

- Conduct an institutional audit to assess local governments capacity to deliver on its mandate and produce a capability statement for service delivery
- To speed up the implementation of the Local economic Development strategies focusing on regional integration, increase the roll out sites of a comprehensive rural development programme, implementation of all summits resolution on Water Indaba, Provincial Economic Summits and Local Government Indaba
- That in 2011 all municipalities Integrated Development Plans will be credible, improved involvement of sector departments and deployment of officials at the appropriate levels and ensure targeted support
- Provision of bulk infrastructure with regards to water, sanitation, electricity and roads
- Speed up service delivery to meet national targets
- Zero tolerance to any form of corruption and those involved irrespective of their positions and status, must be brought to book through due processes

The Indaba emphasized the fact that the Resolutions and the Declaration should be implemented unequivocally in order to ensure that this Summit is not another Talk Shop but there must be action and more action.

The Indaba also noted the on-going service delivery protests which sometimes took a violent posture. In this regard, the Summit has condemned, in the strongest possible terms, violent protests which are characterized by thuggery and called for perpetrators to face the full might of the law.

Issued by the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs.

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01 March 2010

