



**THE PRESIDENCY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

6 April 2017

The Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly,
The Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs and all
Ministers, Deputy Ministers and MECs,
The Chairperson of SALGA and all mayors and municipal leadership,
The Chairperson of the House of Traditional Leaders and all Traditional
Leaders present,
Delegates and Compatriots,
Fellow South Africans,

Good morning to you all,

It is a great pleasure indeed to address you at this Third Presidential Local Government Summit following the two we have held in Khayelitsha and in Gauteng respectively.

We meet today on an important day on which we commemorate the tragic execution of Solomon Mahlangu by the apartheid state in 1979.

He was a dedicated freedom fighter who paid the supreme price for fighting for the liberation of our country and its people.

On this solemn occasion we recall his last words: "My blood will nourish the tree that will bear the fruits of freedom. Tell my people that I love them. They must continue the fight."

The execution of the young Solomon Mahlangu provoked widespread international outrage. Today, in his honour the fight continues, this time to accelerate economic transformation and improve the lives of our people.

Compatriots,

When we met in Khayelitsha we emphasised the importance of the strong collaborations among all spheres of government in service delivery.

In 2014 in Gauteng, we said we must go back to the basics, and recommitted ourselves to providing basic services more adequately, professionally and in a more caring manner.

At the Second Presidential Summit in Khayelitsha there was agreement that local government performance should be improved to ensure provision of basic services and that people's needs are met.

The objective of the Back to Basics programme launched in 2014, is to create well-functioning municipalities that serve their communities better.

It encompasses five pillars:

Putting people first and ensuring effective public participation platforms for them.

Creating conditions for decent living by consistently delivering municipal services to the right quality and standard. This includes planning for and delivery of infrastructure and amenities, maintenance and upkeep.

Thirdly, good governance, efficient administration and accountability.

The fourth is sound financial management and accounting, prudent management of resources and the fifth, sound institutional and administrative capabilities at all levels.

This Summit is now an opportune time, at the beginning of the new term of local government, to deliberate about the priorities for the next five years.

As this is the first time since the last local government elections that we meet formally, let me welcome our newly elected and returning councillors and thank them for availing themselves for national service.

I would like to congratulate all municipalities - councillors and municipal staff – who have made a difference in changing peoples' lives and living conditions.

But before we consider the challenges going forward, let us reflect on the achievements and progress we have made over the last two decades in

changing people's lives and living conditions.

According to the latest General Household Survey of Statistics South Africa, the progress achieved between 2002 and 2015 includes an increase from seventy-seven percent to eighty five percent in the number of households with access to electricity.

We achieved an increase from eighty five percent to more than ninety percent of households with access to piped water.

Also, the share of households obtaining sanitation services went up from sixty-two percent to eighty percent.

At the time of the survey more seventy eight percent of South African households lived in formal dwellings, followed by fourteen percent who lived in informal dwellings, and seven percent in traditional dwellings.

Fourteen percent of South African households were living in RDP or state-subsidised dwellings. In addition, eighteen percent female-headed households received a government housing subsidy, whilst twelve percent of male-headed households received a government housing subsidy.

It must be mentioned that South Africa's population during this period, also increased from about forty million in 2001, to about fifty five million in 2015, and our people are living longer thanks to our improved health services among others.

Although we can be proud of the above achievements we still must confront a number of challenges. I will mention just a few.

We have a high number of households without access to piped water. We have bad roads, poor quality in some of our RDPs, a crumbling water infrastructure and poor sewage systems in some areas. We also face poor financial management in some municipalities and insufficient revenue collection.

There is also still poor interaction between Councillors and communities in some municipalities.

We are aware of these challenges and affected municipalities should work harder and faster to correct them, which is why we come together as we are doing this week.

This Summit aims to provide strategic direction for the new term of local

government.

Importantly, from this Summit must emerge a focused action plan on the way in which all three spheres of government and all partners should work together to ensure the deepening of the Back-to-Basics programme.

The action plan must build on the progress registered since our last summit and should enable us to be even more responsive to the needs and aspirations of local communities than before.

The first phase of the Back-to-Basics programme focused on laying the foundation for a developmental local government, by doing the basics that we just outlined, very properly.

We now have to move to the second phase, in which the Back-to-Basics approach continues to build a functional and developmental local government system that delivers on its Constitutional and legislative mandates within a system of cooperative governance.

Critical in this phase as well, is the need to tackle both the spatial challenges and the socio-economic transformation requirements facing our country and communities.

The second phase of the Back-to-Basics programme will focus on a few key interventions;

First, is ensuring that we build programmes to ‘Manage Municipal Spaces for Radical Social and Economic Transformation’;

Second, is affirming the centrality of integrated and spatially coherent development planning across sectors and spheres; and

Third, strengthening intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder relations in Disaster Risk Reduction.

Colleagues and compatriots,

We must also strive to develop an integrated approach where we not only focus on governance, but also have a deeper understanding and appreciation of the socio-economic problems facing our people.

We must thus have an in-depth understanding of the differences in the space economies of the various types of our municipalities – the metros, secondary cities, districts and small rural towns.

For this purpose, we must develop a national differentiated socio-geographic classification based on this understanding.

As you are aware, we have decided to focus firmly on radical socio-economic transformation in the remaining term of this government.

But let us remind ourselves what we mean by radical socio-economic transformation!

We mean the fundamental change in the structure, systems, institutions and patterns of ownership, management and control of the economy in favour of all South Africans, especially the poor, the majority of whom are African and female.

We need to see radical socio-economic transformation in local government.

This requires that apartheid's settlement geography must be confronted and a new and more cohesive society must be born.

Apartheid geography and centralised spatial planning ensured that the majority of our people were housed and located in marginal areas from the city centres, far away from the economic hub and opportunities, as well as from services.

This perpetuated their exclusion from the economy.

Therefore, the management of municipal spaces for Radical Social and Economic Transformation requires municipalities to do a few things.

They must radically transform the residential areas by connecting and integrating places of work and human settlements to build an inclusive economy and sustainable human settlements.

They must work hard to raise the living standards and quality of life of all the people in the municipal area.

At the centre of a municipality's social transformation activities must be the provision of social protection to the vulnerable; in particular women and children, the eradication of poverty, and the building of social cohesion and social solidarity.

A municipality's objective must also be to turn the tide against the current spatial patterns of apartheid in the next five to fifteen years, though better

and coordinated land use management, ensuring that a new built environment and inclusive spatial landscape emerges across the country.

They must include effective public transport infrastructure development, as well as new integrated and sustainable human settlements and post-apartheid cities that are more connected, liveable, smart and green.

The renewal of old towns, inner-city regeneration as well as township renewal must be a key focus of our municipalities.

They must revitalise and mainstream township economies by supporting the development of township enterprises, co-operatives and SMMEs that will produce goods and services that meet the needs of township residents.

Township entrepreneurs must be used to produce food such as bread for school nutrition and hospitals, clothes for school and police uniforms, and furniture for government offices.

If we do this, we would bring millions of township residents into the mainstream of the economy, hence the need to revamp economic infrastructure and improve these areas.

All spheres must work together to ensure that all township roads and streets are tarred, that the bucket system is eradicated and that all hostels are turned into family units.

All spheres must prevent illegal land invasion and growth of informal settlements.

If we do all this, our people will see a difference in their lives and the fruits of freedom will become visible to all.

Colleagues and compatriots,

In this year's State of the Nation Address, I emphasised that we are building a South Africa that is free from poverty, inequality and unemployment, as guided by the National Development Plan (NDP).

This requires stronger collaborations and changes in the implementation of the Back-to-Basics programme.

Indeed, there is a lot we should do to build better municipalities and ensure that our people's experience of local government is a pleasant one.

That is what this summit is all about. We must all ensure that when people visit municipal offices, they return home smiling because of an excellent service they would have received.

They should also live in communities where there is water, good roads, electricity, recreational parks and other amenities.

In the 2017 State of the Nation Address we announced that we dedicate 2017 to honour Oliver Reginald Tambo.

It is the year of unity in action by all South Africans as we move South Africa forward, together.

Let us emphasise unity within local government, in honour of OR Tambo, and so that we can achieve all our goals faster.

It is my pleasure and honour to declare the Third Presidential Local Government Summit officially open, and to launch Phase 2 of the Back to Basics Programme.

I thank you.

Issued by The Presidency
Pretoria

Complaints / Public Enquiries

Toll Free: 17737

E-Fax: [086 681 0987](tel:0866810987)

Email: president@presidency.gov.za