

OPENING REMARKS BY HIS WORSHIP EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF SEKHUKHUNE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY CLLR. KEAMOTSENG STANLEY RAMAILA ON THE OCCASION OF THE 2019 STRATEGIC SESSION HELD AT THE RANCH HOTEL OUTSIDE POLOKWANE ON THE 11TH - 12TH FEBRUARY 2019, 08:30AM

Mosepedisi wa Modiro

Members of the Mayoral Committee present here this morning;

Speaker of Council and the Chief Whip;

Chairpersons of our Section 79 Committees;

All our Councillors present here today;

The Municipal Manager of our District Municipality, Mme Norah Maseko;

Municipal Managers from our family of 4 Local Municipalities;

All Senior Managers and Managers of our District Municipality;

Representatives of Sector Departments, Coghsta, DWS, Office of the Premier, Limpopo Economic Development Agency, government parastatal Lepelle Northern Water, Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, Department of Mineral Resources;

Support Staff, the employees of our district municipality;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good Morning!

Thobela!

Programme Director

We have gathered here today following on of the most exciting and progressive State of the Nation Address as delivered by our Commander in Chief, State President Cyril Ramaphosa, on the 7th February 2019. Historically, SONA presents to us progress report flowing from previous pronouncements and also outlines marching orders in a form of policy proposals as we work together to grow South Africa.

We are therefore encouraged by the tone and the spirit that SONA ushered in particularly the detailed emphasise on the economic stimulus package from which we stand to benefit as a rural municipality. And among others, the concrete expression by President Ramaphosa on the establishment of Special Economic Zones, with a specific focus on the Industrial Parks, accords us with hope towards making Steepoort valley an SEZ.

And also among others, President emphasised strongly on the Thuma Mina campaign and wish to take this opportunity and reaffirm our commitment as the district municipality towards immediately responding positively towards the deliverables as set out. Coupled with all this is the overarching ANC election Manifesto launch in Durban, which needed to be embraced by all in this gathering.

In addition to the above, we are reminded that our gathering here today comes at a critical era in our history as a nation where a declaration has been made that the 8th May 2019 is the date set for national and provincial elections. And what this simply means is that the electorate will renew the mandate of political parties to advance their socio-economic and political discourse.

And it is a common knowledge that the election season in its character comes with pressure groups and protest actions and in the main it means that we should not be found wanting. I am therefore making a clarion call to all involved to be n the alert.

Programme Director

This engagement is very imperative and it flows positively with the aims and the objectives of this strategic planning session, as a platform to self-introspect using the tools of analysis as captured as SWOT. And we are therefore called upon to analyse the narrative our people have in order to give concrete expression on how we have fared thus far and where we need to take our district forward.

Please allow me to hasten and say that our gathering here should be able to separate between two important aspects, that is interference and intervention. The two are very critical if we have to equally understand the defining line between the role administrative and political arms has to play.

It is against the same background, that this important session should conduct its business in a view that address itself as both the Mid Year Review 2018-2019 and Mid-Term Review, as it come exactly two years after the 2016 Local government elections. And whatever assessment will be made should be based on the 2016 local government elections Manifesto of the ruling party African National Congress.

And in doing this assessment the above are key yardsticks that should be in recognition of the fact that Sekhukhune District Municipality is ANC-run municipality. And therefore we dare not falter to include other narratives that do not align with the directives of the ANC.

You will all remember that I have often spoken with with you about the importance of sharing the vision of this current leadership as elected in August 2016 local government elections. And together we have journeyed far too long to be able to

majestically pronounce that Sekhukhune today is a better place to be than it was before 1994. We have achieved enourmously and we know that more still need to be done.

Programme Director

Our mandate shall forever be 'a better live for all' and shall we remain vigilant to the fact that our people will always judge us on the strength and our abilities to deliver their needs. Unfortunately for us as elected leaders, we depend on your ability as appointed officials to implement our strategic objectives. If you sabotage our vision then we fail and our people will record our administration as the one that has failed them.

That is why throughout the two years of our term in office, we have often told you about how this leadership prides itself with love and care to you as implementing agents and committed itself to give you undivided support at all times. We stand here today recommitting ourselves to that pronouncement.

Having said that, we did as you to earn our trust by simply adhering to simple conditions which in the main speaks to you avoiding the toxic mix of incompetence, corruption and laziness. And with compassion, we have guided you that this is achievable if only you stop putting your hands in the cooky jar, improve on time management, adhere to set dress code, eradicate absentisim, to name but a few.

We have in addition requested your goodselves to understand that ours is a leadership that is highly motivated by officials who embrace the outcomes based approach as opposed to output based approach. That's when we guided you to always look forward to delivarables in addition to compliance. And to this day, we are still committed to this mission.

We are called upon to work together and grow South Africa. And we will achieve that not only through word of mouth. but our actions as a focussed group shall give concrete expression towards this resolve of ours. We are readily poised to deliver quality services to our people from Malebitsa to Sefateng sa Thorometsane.

Programme Director

We are highly motivated that already we have been able to **rebrand, remodel and repackage Sekukhune as a brand**. It is indeed with joy and happiness that gone are those days when we have been labelled as only existing through legislation and not able to respond to the needs of our people. Today, we are a proud member of the developmental local government family in good standing.

A quick reflection of some of the key pronouncements made during a first strategic planning session we held at Blyde Cannon on in December 2017, gives us a clear road map towards what need to be done as a collective that is tasked with growing Sekhukhune together.

It was during that session, where we committed ourselves to do the following:

- Fight against all forms of corruption, nepotism and incompetencies, the toxic mix, in whatever form or character they manifest themselves;
- Strive to eradicate atrocities of inhumane livelihood where the people of SDM drink water with animals and suffer indignity of using bushes and dongas as toilets;
- Committed ourselves to end roll-overs and maladministration of the public finances;
- To provide clean, portable and safe drinking water and decent sanitation projects as our core mandate and our business and to treat our communities as our customers; and
- Noted that government has done more to improve the quality of the lives of our citizens, however, we are conscious of the fact that more still need to be done to realize the dream of a better lives for all our people.

We reflect on the above based on the fact that ‘the past and the present are inter connected. In forging our future this generation needs to grapple with the persistent reality of the past and ask difficult questions and learn from it’.

Programme Director

We have gathered here in honour of the 1,1 million people of Sekhukhune residing at 290 thousand house-holds, from our family of four local municipalities. And our guiding principles are that of the Freedom Charter, National Development Plan (Vision 2030), and this is achieved through our mission of Integrated Economic Development and Sustainable Service Delivery.

Together, we will engage our departmental performance and like I said earlier ask ourselves difficult questions. We will honestly ask ourselves if our current performance represent what we agreed at Blyde Cannon in 2017 or not. If not, we will have to come with ways and means to turn-around the situation for the better.

Just to give but a practical example, all of us are aware that we have been achieving ‘unqualified audit opinions’ from the AG since 2013/14 – 2017/18 financial year. And please allow me to hasten and say that we achieved the **2017-2018 unqualified audit opinion because of our Municipal Manager Mme Norah Maseko**, who is an accountant by profession. Without Ms. Maseko, we would have regressed following the resignation with immediate effect of the acting CFO who refused to serve notice.

Now, the difficult questions we are asking ourselves are, is that where we want to be? Don’t we need to achieve clean audit opinion? And what steps can be taken to respond to matters that the AG has raised which hinders us from achieving clean audit? With this said, does our action represent the brand Sekhukhune of our people and the current leadership both in the district and nationally?

I call upon senior administration, middle management, staff and all members of Sekhukhune community to understand that **announcement by political leadership amounts policy directives** that must be adhered to all all times. And therefore, it is disturbing for me to state the following:

Programme Director

During the State of the District Address 2018, I have listed villages at which we as a district had competitive advantage to **generate 'own revenue'**. Since then, nothing has happened to implement this mandate on this matter which is both policy statement and AG matter of emphasise.

The issue of generating own revenue is so critical that it pains my heart when administration is doing nothing about it. And I could sense that there is no preparedness on your part to increase our revenue base. And standing in front of you, I have taken a decision to mandate this strategic planning session to do something about this important matter as a political directive. And as we do that, someone need to take a fall for not implementing this policy directive.

Another thorny issue is regarding the **implementation of turn-around strategy** in the district municipality. A shocking example to this effect pertains to forward planning, where a practical example is the recent appointment of contractors in January, with only five months left for implementation of this projects.

I therefore put it to this strategic planning session to present a **recovery plan or accellaration plan** that outlines ways and means of making these projects a success. And if this is not done, this session will be classified as fruitless and wasteful expenditure. This is on the basis that we will encounter roll-overs which I have spoken against.

Further, the issue of **matters of emphasise** by the AG keeps cropping up with no sign of action plan to deal with with them. Examples are:

- The issue of material loses, and
- Supply of water to Monstrolus 24 hours 7 days a week, however, no accounts, no billing, and no efforts are being made, to name but a few.

Programme Director

As I conclude, please allow me to remind this gathering that our district municipality, Sekhukhune, is an **executive type** of a municipality. The Executive Mayor is elected by Council and appoint Members of the Mayoral Committee. And therefore Executive Mayor has powers to review or rearrange Mayoral Committee if the need arise.

I am making this reference to remind MayCo, particularly those who are full time, that it is implerative upon them to meet with their directors and approve reports that are going to be presented at all meetings. No report should find its way to the MayCO without the approval of the MMC responsible for that department.

I am making a strong emphasize to the above because, if this strategic planning session is taking place and the reports to be presented have not been blessed by the MMCs, it therefore means that this strat-plan is for MM and officials. All these pointers that I have mentioned here today are but few of the critical yardsticks to be used towards the success of this important session.

Programme Director, lastly, please allow me to borrow this words of wisdom from one of the renowned revolutionaries of our times. And I quote:

“It is difficult for me to imagine what personal liberty is enjoyed by an enemployed hungry person. True freedom can only be where there is no exploitation and oppression of one person by another; where there is not unemployment, and where a person is not living in fear of losing his job, his home and his bread. Only in such a

society personal and any other freedom can exist for real and not on paper” close quote.

The author is Joseph Stalin, a Soviet revolutionary and political leader who government the Soviet Union of Russia, which is one of the super powers today.

I THANK YOU!