

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE PREMIER OF GAUTENG, DAVID MAKHURA, AT THE SALGA NATIONAL CONFERENCE; SANDTON CONVENTION CENTRE.**

**29 November 2016**

His Excellency, the Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa, Honourable Cyril Ramaphosa;

Deputy Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Hon. Andries Nel and Deputy Minister Obed Bapela;

The Outgoing Chairperson of SALGA, Honourable Thabo Manyosi, MP;

The President of the United Cities and Local Governments, Cllr Parks Tau;

His Worship, Mayor Khalifa Sall, the President of the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa;

Former Commonwealth Local Government Forum, Dr Carl Wright;

The NEC of SALGA and Provincial Leaders;

Leaders of the Faith-Based Community;

Mayors, Speakers, Chief Whips and Councillors;

Distinguished Delegates;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is my honour to welcome all of you to the Gauteng City Region, the proud host of the 4<sup>th</sup> National Conference and 20th Anniversary of the South African Local Government Association. Gauteng is the home of choice for all South Africans and millions of migrants from all over our continent.

Allow me to extend a warm welcome to Mayor Khalifa Sall, the Mayor of Dakar and the President of the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa. I also wish to take this opportunity, once again, to congratulate Africa and South Africa for working tirelessly to elect Councillor Parks Tau as the President of the United Cities and Local Government, the first African to be elected to this highest office in this august body.

We are certain that the African cities and municipalities now have a strong and unequivocal voice in the structures and decision-making processes of the United Nations.

This 4th National Conference and 20th anniversary celebrations take place three months after the local government elections in which new councillors were elected

and new municipal office bearers subsequently elected by newly constituted municipal councils.

Two months ago, on 29 September, I had the honour to address SALGA Gauteng Provincial Conference which also elected its new leadership. A number of resolutions were adopted in that Provincial Conference, amongst which is the need to enact a provincial legislation that ensures that SALGA is consulted all policies and laws that have an impact on local government. The Gauteng Provincial Government support this important resolution and we will work together with the Provincial Executive Committee of SALGA to implement it.

At that SALGA Gauteng Provincial Conference, we warned Mayors against the tendency by big municipalities to think that they don't need SALGA. I would like to repeat the message about the important of SALGA and the need for municipalities in our country to be members of this body. Those municipalities and cities that work in isolation from SALGA must know that they will not get support from our Provincial Government. In fact, this National Conference should send a strong message to the municipalities that don't want to work through SALGA that they are isolating themselves from getting support from national and provincial government. How do they refuse to cooperate with other municipalities and still expect cooperation from other spheres of government? It is both naive and narrow-minded to do so.

SALGA is the collective voice of local government and it must not be undermined by those who pursue narrow political agendas. Without a strong SALGA, we cannot have strong towns and cities which are drivers of our provincial, national, regional and continent's economy.

I would like to repeat another message I conveyed to the SALGA Provincial Conference. This is the message about what the primary purpose or core business of politics and public representatives is. This message is important because we live in a world where there are unprecedented levels of cynicism about politics and politicians. This anti-politics that has led to the election of divisive leaders, the resurgence of many rightwing parties and the rise of divisive political rhetoric in many parts of the world. We need a more unifying and transformative politics and inclusive economics.

Accordingly, we have to pose and answer question: what is the core business or primary purpose of politics, why are we public representatives?

Politics must never be about pomp and ceremony. Politics must never be about the clamor to appear in the media every day. It must never be about spin-doctoring the lived reality and experiences of citizens in pursuit of a good media image of politicians.

Politics cannot be about political parties and politicians. It must be about the citizens and their collective aspirations and common destiny. Political parties should just be understood as vehicles and the means through which we pursue the goal of serving our citizenry.

I would like to argue that politics must be more profound, more transformative and more impactful on the lives of ordinary citizens throughout the length and breadth of our province and our country.

Politics must be about using public policy efficaciously and deploying public resources efficiently and effectively. It must be about the values of service and loyalty to the citizens. This is a call to return to value-based politics without which there can be no honour.

Politics must be about helping the youth to realise their dreams through access to better educational and entrepreneurship opportunities so that they can live independent and meaningful lives as productive and conscientious citizens.

Politics must be about helping women to break the shackles of patriarchy by empowering them to playful their full role in the economy and society as equal citizens.

Politics must be about building an economy that creates more jobs and includes blacks, women and youth. Politics must be about building socially cohesive communities where all our citizens and local residents live together in peace and harmony as equals, with equal access to the means to support life.

Politics must also be about building an accountable, responsive and clean government. We are not getting clean audits in order to please the Auditor-General. We are doing so to make the point that it is good leadership to manage public finances well and account for every Rand we collect from tax payers and rates payers.

Politics must be about making a difference in the lives of others because we are servants of the people. Many of you have dedicated your lives to doing something that is very difficult for family life - politics - but it must be done nevertheless if our communities, our country and our continent is to move forward.

I have always believed that being a councillor is one of the most difficult jobs in our country. It is stressful. It is a 24 hour job, especially if you are a Ward Councillor. People knock at your door any time of day and night and they expect an answer. Often when a national or provincial government fails to deliver the commitments made in pomp and ceremony, the community blames the councillor or the municipality. We appreciate the work of our councillors and local government.

Cooperative governance is a constitutional imperative that binds us together like Siamese twins. We have no choice but to work together in the best interest of the people we serve, the citizens of our province and cities. Without the cooperation and collaboration of local government, provincial and national government will not succeed. Similarly, local government will not succeed without the cooperation and collaboration of the two other spheres of government.

Let us remember that politics is about citizens, not pomp and ceremony. We are not "celebrity politicians" but servants of the people. Without serving the people honestly and diligently, politics will become embroiled in perennial cynicism and people will believe in anti-systemic and anti-establishment parties and politicians.

If you in local sphere of government and us in the provincial government understand what politics is about as well as what it is not about, and do our best to act in a manner that enhances public confidence, Africa will develop and grow in an inclusive and sustainable way.

I welcome you from the cities and towns, townships and villages, to our province, the Home of Homo Naledi, the Cradle of humankind, the economic and industrial hub of our country and continent.

I wish 4th SALGA National Conference tremendous success. We need a strong and united SALGA.

Thank you.