

**OPENING ADDRESS BY GAUTENG PREMIER DAVID MAKHURA AT THE  
GAUTENG CITY REGION SENIOR MANAGEMENT SERVICE (SMS) ANNUAL  
CONFERENCE. BIRCHWOOD. CITY OF EKURHULENI.**

**30 MARCH 2016**

Programme Director, MEC Panyaza Lesufi;  
The Minister for Public Service, Advocate Ngoako Ramathlodi;  
Members of the Executive Council and Executive Mayors;  
Advocate Thuli Madonsela, SA's Public Protector;  
Resident Public Service Commissioner, Dr Mike Seloane;  
Director General Ms Phindile Baleni, Heads of Departments and Members of the  
Senior Management Service;  
Municipal and City Managers;  
CEOs of Government Agencies and Entities;  
Our distinguished professors and esteemed panelists;  
Fellows South Africans and fellow residents of Gauteng:

Once more, we come together at this year's Gauteng Conference of the Senior Managers of the Public Service, as public officials and public servants whose singular job is to deploy our capacity and capabilities in the service of the people of our country and our province.

Gathered here are the most senior public servants upon whose shoulders lies the enormous responsibility to turn public policy and government plans into a lived experience of citizens.

Ladies and gentlemen, you bear the onerous burden to implement and execute South Africa's National Development and its provincial blue-print, our ten-pillar Programme for Transformation, Modernisation and Re-industrialisation of the Gauteng City Region.

The NDP envisions “a South Africa where everyone feels free yet bounded to others; where everyone embraces their full potential; a country where opportunity is determined not by birth, but by ability, education and hard work. Realising such a society will require transformation of the economy and focused efforts to build the country’s capabilities”.

Correctly, this year’s SMS Conference focuses on the “*Building State Capabilities to Implement the NDP and the TMR.*” It is expected that the Conference will clarify the notion of “state capacity and state capability” beyond glib references and official excuses proffered in public discourse.

The NDP makes the following case about state capabilities: “a developmental state builds the capabilities of people to improve their own lives, while intervening to correct historical inequalities...Citizens have the right to expect government to deliver certain basic services, and to hold leaders accountable for their actions. They also have responsibility to other citizens, including mutual respect, tolerance and abiding by the laws of the land. Leaders throughout society have to balance the power they hold with responsibility, including with listening to and tolerating different and diverse views, promoting social cohesion and working together to resolve problems...To accelerate development, South Africa needs the active support of all citizens, leadership in all sectors that puts the country’s collective interests ahead of narrow, short term goals, and a radically improved government performance. In some instances, policy change may be necessary, but in most areas it is about getting the basics right, implementing government programmes and holding people accountable for their actions and finding innovative solutions to complex challenges.”

In this regard, the discourse on “state capacity and state capabilities” must resist the temptation to focus only on technical capacity and managerial competence to include leadership abilities.

While technical skills are definitely necessary, they must be matched with leadership attributes that include ability to mobilise citizens support and participation and the courage to make tough decisions underpinned by both law and ethics.

In other words, we need a healthy combination of technical capacity and leadership abilities in order to arrive at capabilities. Improving government's ability to deliver on agreed policies and programmes and review those that don't work is as important as having capabilities to mobilise for genuine citizen activism and to provide courageous, ethical and accountable leadership.

Accordingly, we in Gauteng have adopted a governance approach that places high premium on responsiveness, activism, accountability, performance, integrity and transparency. We have adopted the Governance and Administration Roadmap which seeks to build state capabilities in areas that will improve government performance, enhance ethical, accountable and responsive leadership and promote citizen activism. The DG will outline our Roadmap later.

I want to assure the people of Gauteng that we are serious about building a capable, professional, accountable, responsive and clean governance in Gauteng. We are serious about putting people first. Batho Pele!

We are serious about improving financial management and eliminating waste, maladministration and corruption from the public service in Gauteng. We are putting in place measures to ensure that corrupt and incompetent officials and politicians have no place to hide.

The introduction of the open tender system and integrity management units in all departments will go a long way in preventing fraud and corruption.

I would like to reiterate what I said during the State of the Province that in Gauteng, bureaucratic incompetence is not permissible and corruption is not acceptable. State capture or undue influence of government decision-making processes for personal or private gain is a crime against the people. Corruption is the number one enemy of the people. Corrupt public officials, civil servants and businesspeople are the enemies of the people.

We need a partnership with Chapter 9 institutions in fighting the scourge and in ensuring that those involved are criminally prosecuted. I would like to call on

Corruption Watch and other civil society groups to work with us in fighting corruption. You are not our enemies.

I would like to report that we have agreed with all Vice Chancellors of Gauteng universities to form a partnership on improving government performance and promoting balanced economic development throughout the Gauteng City Region.

In this regard, we are developing an MoU which will bring together all Schools of Public Management and Governance into a joint programme to deliver the state-of-the-art capability development for senior public servants and public office bearers in provincial and local government in Gauteng. It is back to school.

We can't run government through common sense in an increasingly complex world. Public management and governance theories and practices are changing all the time and we must ahead of the pack. It is no longer adequate to train managers and civil servants who just throw the rule book at every problem are like the old IBM mainframe in the age of the micro-chip. The public service sore needs more leaders. We are training too many managers and developing few leaders.

Programme Director, during my Inaugural State of the Province Address in June 2014, I made a commitment that we will change the way government works.

To date, as Gauteng, we are a leader in the modernisation of public services through the introduction of ICT in education, healthcare, community safety and general citizen services.

We are increasingly becoming a pacesetter in many areas of government performance. For instance our Department of Infrastructure Development received the highest number of awards at the 2015 EPWP excellence awards – six awards, followed by KZN with three awards. In addition, the HRD Unit of this department was awarded the 2015 Best Institutional HRD Unit in the country.

Our Department of Roads and Transport's Motor Vehicle Registration Unit won the first prize at the Centre for Public Service Innovation for its Revenue Information Management System.

In addition, the Provincial Treasury won third prize at the 2015 Centre for Public Service Innovation Awards for introducing an online payroll certification application, eliminating delays as well as ghost workers.

This we can say without fear of contradiction that Gauteng is the envy of many in our country because of our public service performance - we are succeeding in building centres of public service excellence.

We are also encouraged that nineteen of our departments and agencies achieved clean audits in the 2014/15 financial year. Only one department and one agency got an unsatisfactory audit outcome. Our task is to maintain this high standard of performance. This includes cracking the whip on those that receive unsatisfactory audit outcomes.

We have already changed the leadership of G-Fleet, our fleet management company, which has repeatedly been obtaining negative audit outcomes. We will continue to act in all cases of poor performance, firmly, without fear or favour.

In addition the leadership of the Department of Health, which failed to get an unqualified audit opinion, has been placed on very strict performance terms to turn the situation around. We note the progress made by this department to significantly improve its finances and service delivery. We however look forward to the day, hopefully very soon, when this department will be brought back to normality.

We have intervened decisively in the Department of Human Settlements to enhance its capacity to deliver on its mandate mainly the development of mega human settlements and post-apartheid cities.

Programme Director, it is a matter of pride that most of our Departments spent 99% of their infrastructure budgets in the 2015/16 financial year. This is commendable, given the long history of under-spending on infrastructure in Gauteng.

We are also making progress towards our goal of reducing substantially the amount of time it takes for us to pay our service providers – 90% of our departments now pay service providers within thirty days. Our target is to pay all service providers within 15 days before the end of our term of office in 2019. The departments of Economic Development and Agriculture are already paying their service providers within 14 days.

We continue to put pressure on all those departments that are still lagging behind with regards to the payment of service providers within thirty days. These include the Departments of Health, Education, Human Settlements and Infrastructure Development. The relevant MECs have made commitment to me that they too will meet the minimum 30 Day payment national requirement and work towards the provincial higher standard of 15 days. This is Gauteng!

Gauteng is a leader in promoting transparency and integrity in the tendering processes through the implementation of the Open Tender System. The open tender system is one of the most important innovations of this fifth administration in Gauteng.

We are leading the country in ensuring that procurement decisions are taken above board. Our new approach has attracted considerable public attention and widespread review, including by the National Treasury and other provinces. We are setting a new standard for transparency in public procurement.

We are now extending this transparent system of appointing service providers to all departments, especially those with big budgets. We once again congratulate the City of Ekurhuleni for also implementing the Open Tender System.

Through the open tender system and the promotion of integrity, we are creating an environment where clean governance will thrive - we are making important strides towards our goal of being a corruption-free province in our life time.

We are also working hard to reduce bureaucratic inefficiencies and are addressing, with greater urgency, issues of the cost and ease of doing business. Among others, we are proud that it now takes us 90 days to process Environmental Impact Assessments. Our target is to reduce this to thirty days.

We are equally encouraged that evidence is emerging to the effect that through our Ntirhisano Community Outreach programme, which is a result of us being an activist, caring and responsive government, we are beginning to change the way government works and are impacting positively on the lives of the people of Gauteng.

Through Ntirhisano we have succeeded in turning around the mood in communities. We are restoring levels of trust and public confidence on the ground. We are changing the citizen's experience of government.

As we have said before Ntirhisano has already received independent acknowledgement from the Municipal IQ Monitor, which reports that service delivery protests in Gauteng have decreased from 21% to 15% in 2015. This is the most dramatic decline in the past decade and a half.

Going forward, we are now intensifying Ntirhisano to cover more areas. We are also taking Ntirhisano to firms that are strategic to the economy of the GCR.

I take this opportunity to urge senior management to be part of the Ntirhisano programme. There is no better way we can assess the impact or lack thereof of our programmes and interventions, unless we engage directly with communities. Ntirhisano is our only reliable eyes and ears on the ground! It is the single most effective monitoring and evaluation tool!

Our participation in Ntirhisano as senior management must also include ensuring that issues raised through Ntirhisano find expression in what we do as departments on a daily basis. Ntirhisano is not only about listening to community concerns. It is about working with the community to resolve their problems.

Programme Director, despite the progress we are making to transform the state, to improve service delivery and to change for the better our people's experience of government, we must not rest on our laurels.

There are areas where we have weaknesses. There is wasteful and unauthorized expenditure. There are areas of under-spending and non-payment of service providers due to poor planning. There are cases of managers who do business with government. There are still cases of corruption.

We must turn the tide against bad public management and take to a higher level the momentum we have built. We must build more centres of public service excellence. We have to stay the course.

We are relaunching the Premier's Excellence Awards to focus them on delivery of the TMR. The best department, municipality, agency, branch or unit that delivers on the vision and priorities of the GCR and ten pillars of the TMR must be showcased and incentivized.

We know too well that the people of Gauteng are intolerant of government failure and bureaucratic incompetence. They want a government that honours its commitments. Our capable public officials must, therefore, help us ensure that in this province, failure to deliver is not an option.

One of the distinguishing features of a capable and developmental state is its ability to work across government departments and not in silos. This is a necessary prerequisite for the state to act as a coherent and collective entity. This is a capability we cannot take for granted.

It is for this reason that we will continue to insist that in line with our vision of a Gauteng City Region, we must at all times both, in word and in action, reinforce the idea that Gauteng is governed as a single, integrated City Region.

This requires of us to move out of our silos, to always integrate our planning and our implementation.

In particular, we need to strengthen the work we are doing collectively as clusters; always keeping an eye on the bigger picture and always concerned about maximising the impact and expanding the reach of our interventions. The time for making small uncoordinated, inconsequential interventions has long passed. We must integrate and coordinate our work.

We can report that work has begun to give legal effect to our GCR institutions such the Premier's Co-ordination Forum, the Infrastructure Coordinating Committee, ICT Steering Committee and the Aerotropolis Steering Committee.

Of course, we will not succeed without national government support. We will not succeed without partnership with civil society. We will succeed without Chapter Nine and Ten institutions. We will not succeed without training and research providers and consultants who can help us to build internal state capabilities.

And above all, we will not succeed without the passion, courage and resilience to act against corruption and incompetence in order to safeguard our country's collective interests.

This Conference is a school for learning, a platform to showcase centres of excellence and share experiences on how to improve government performance so that our people can be happy.

In conclusion, I would like to refer our senior managers and public office bearers to read, among others, two Books written by Michael Barber, a long time civil servant in the Blair Administration: "Instruction to Deliver" and "How to run Government so that Citizens benefit and Taxpayers don't go Crazy".

Certainly, there are more books to read on public management and governance and there are more experiences from all over the world to learn from. Running government is both an art and a science. It must be studied and mastered in practice.

I trust that you will all contribute to the success of this Conference.

Thank you.