

**OPENING ADDRESS BY HER WORSHIP, THE
EXECUTIVE MAYOR CLLR. EN MAKHABANE
AT THE STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION
(LEKGOTLA) HELD ON THE 21ST TO 23RD MAY
2012**

Facilitators of the Lekgotla Programme,

Honourable Speaker Cllr. RK Segone,

Chief Whip,

Members of the Mayoral Committee,

Fellow Councillors,

*Provincial Treasury Risk Management Unit
Representative*

*Acting Municipal Manager of Nkangala District
Municipality, Mr Zimbwa*

Municipal Manager, Mama Maredi and her team

It is indeed an honour for me to address you on this special occasion. I must say that this process is long overdue.

When the current political leadership was elected into power during the 2011 Local Government elections, promises related to service delivery were made to the community as per the Election Manifesto of the ruling party to make their lives better.

Starting this session, immediately after a Sunday, Programme Facilitator, I wondered if "there is a Biblical basis for Strategic Planning?" How did the men and women of the cloth think and execute what we are today using as point of reference for our lives?

It is documented that the Strategic Planning is not only a biblical concept, but is a biblical mandate. It is God's chosen method of working to establish how leaders (like you and me) intend

to carry out the Great Commission- that of serving the people.

In the tested process of planning, you do not just repeat the previous years' work, but one has to be "intentional" in knowing how to accomplish God's mission in our setting, like in Victor Khanye Local Municipality.

It is not my intention to give you a sermon, but Programme Facilitator, allow me to take you through a memory lane as we look at the assertion of Mark Marshall (Lifeway Mission, 2002), who argued that the Book of Proverbs has a number of clear practical principles regarding strategic planning (please look at chapter(s) 14, 15, 16 and 20). So, colleagues you will agree with me that this session of Lekgotla is very much in line with what "ought to be done"

Bringing you closer home, The President, Jacob Zuma in his address during the previous year's January 8 Statement said "*the defining moment*

for this government and its administration is it knows where the people live, what they think, and acting fast on issues they raise". I am of the view that the leadership of Victor Khanye Local Municipality heed this call in the execution of their leadership and elected mandate.

Programme facilitator, we just concluded a series of Community Izimbisos, where we interacted with our communities at their own settings, listening to their thoughts, and now as we are converged here for the coming two and half days, we will be forging the roadmap to guide us for acting within the reasonable and accepted standards of responding to our communities needs (individually as ward leaders, and collectively as political and administrative leadership). This is what this Strategic Lekgotla is about.

This strategic planning session being the first Lekgotla retreat for the Council in office is meant to prepare the Council to enter its second financial year focused. We will use this Lekgotla to reflect, look inwards and outwards, look back and forward, and in undertaking a group reflection we should arrive at a consensus group owned way forward, not only for 2012/2013 financial year but even beyond that period.

I truly trust Programme Facilitator that this will not be another talk show or an outing but when it is concluded, we should be able to come up with a clear programme of action document that will be implementable.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the challenge remains that a large percentage of our people, particularly the poor communities in our rural areas still struggle to access and afford basic services. While we celebrate the other successes

of our municipality such as Clean Audit and recently the Blue Drop- Most Improved Water Quality Award, our challenge for the coming years is building on these success and to fully take on all the responsibilities of leadership and stewardship of developmental local government.

As you well know, the following service delivery related challenges continue to be a pain for us as leadership:

- Water and Sanitation , particularly the infrastructure refurbishment
- Development in line with the Spatial Development Framework
- Land use management, and provision of land for middle income earners
- LED strategy development
- Empowerment of our youth and women population

- Provision of family parks for relaxation and entertainment to foster sound family relationships
- Capitalisation of our private and public partnerships for maximising the resources to foster impact development
- Of course, sound, critical thinking and resourceful administration supporting the political leadership to sustain the successes and putting the municipality on the map in Mpumalanga, nationally and globally.

Programme Facilitator, there is no doubt in my mind that the team converged here today their second skin is knowledge and internalisation of local government five national key performance areas, which informs Victor Khanye Local Municipality's core business. Without prompting this Lekgotla outcome, I believe the team should look at issues related to:

Basic service delivery because it is impacting directly on the lives of people. Most of the protests we are seeing at municipalities these days, are service delivery related hence it is very important that we should put more emphasis on this.

Our people in Botleng Extensions 3, 4 and 5 and farm rural areas are a constant concern for leadership solution with regard to water supply. We need to find ways to improve the supply. This is coupled with sanitation provision.

Though the Blomendaal connection (Rand Water) is now at an advanced stage, the leadership challenge will be sensitizing the community to pay for the services as Rand Water does not come cheap.

We plaud ourselves *Manene ne Manenekazi*, as we have improved a lot on the supply of electricity especially at the rural areas, however

the challenge is at both Botleng Ext. 4 & 5 where power failure seem to be prevalent.

It is important that the community should be informed about the power cuts which are maintenance related.

The level of unemployment, especially amongst our youth has reached an unacceptable state, and our municipality comprising of large percentage of young population cannot afford or continue to deal with issues of **Local economic development** as "business usual". The mining and agriculture economic thrusts in our municipality need to be fully explored to contribute to the community participation in the economic mainstream, particularly the youth.

Of course we take note of many related social ills that may be hurdles to jump for our young community to pace themselves with the rest of the district, provincial and national expertise

related to the skills to be competitive in the economic arena.

For this, I challenge the think tanks converge here today to think out of the box and come up with visionary plans to turn around the economic situation of Victor Khanye local municipality.

It is indeed comforting Programme Facilitator to note that at the moment the municipality is on the right track with regard to administration and management of financial resources and we need to sustain the internal controls to maintain its **financial viability status**. It is important that we continue the resilience and vigilance to guard against the temptations of financial mismanagement which may lead to fraud, corruption and discrediting the leadership of this municipality.

To this end, I urge all of you to be knowledgeable of all legislative prescripts and

support the administration in their compliance efforts.

I must say that our collection is not at a rate that we would wanted it to be hence we need to be steadfast with our debt collection strategy implementation and revenue enhancement. This will surely take us to the next capacity level and contribute to our economic growth and investors' attraction.

Programme Facilitator, the public institution like our municipality subscribe to all the tenants of democracy as guided by the Republic Constitution. We take matters of **good governance** serious, and the Honourable Speaker and Fellow Councillors with support of Administration demonstrated the understanding of this with the most improved **public participation** programme implemented in the past weeks.

This has defined how the municipality intend to lead the service delivery through "working with the people, for the people's development, as together we can achieve more".

Our involvement of the public in programmes such as the IDP, Budget is applaudable however we can improve on this.

As I conclude, Programme Facilitator, the expected outcomes of this Strategic Lekgotla should forge the consensus on the **immediate, medium and long term strategic priorities**, as well as financial and political commitments.

The recommendations and decisions made during this Lekgotla must be evidence-based, feasible and sustainable.

On behalf of Victor Khanye Local Municipality leadership I count on all of you to commit all your being (physical, emotional and intellectual

capabilities), which will ensure that this Lekgotla become a success.

I thank you