



**CLLR ANDREW MAPHETLE – EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF  
POTCHEFSTROOM  
WELCOME ADDRESS  
SALGA MEMBERS PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY  
07- 08 JUNE 2006  
10H00**

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Mme BEE Molewa – the Premier of the North West provincial;

Honourable FP Vilakazi – MEC of Local Government and Housing;

MEC's that are here with us today;

Councillor KG Lobelo – Chairperson of SALGA North West;

Cllr A Masondo – the national Chairperson of SALGA;

MPL's;

Commissioner Themba Kgasi – Gender Equality Commissioner for this region;

Mr Kabelo Mataboge – the Chairperson of the North West Provincial Youth Commission;

MULTA Chairperson;

All Executive Mayors and Mayors;

Speakers;

Councilors;

Municipal Managers;

Distinguished guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

First of all I would like to acknowledge and welcome you to this occasion – here at Potchefstroom, your home away from home! I salute you all - women and men who have committed themselves to promote the noble cause of peace, truth and a better life of our people.

Our struggle for freedom has a long history. It goes back to the days when the African people fought spear in hand against the British and Boer colonizers.

Together we have fought for our land, against low wages, high rents, dompas, Bantu education and for the right to vote for a government of our choice. Programme Director – I believe that as true comrades and compatriots, we would all remember the famous words of Comrade Pixley ka Isaka Seme when he called all the Africans to one national organization and said:

I quote:

“We are one people, these divisions, these jealousies, are the cause of all our woes today”.

Close quote.

We have been living and guided by the struggle and commitment taken by our ancestors – in that Africans must be brought together as one people to defend their rights and freedoms. We must, constrained by and yet regardless of the accumulated effect of our historical burdens, seize the time to define for ourselves what we want to make of our shared destiny.

Indeed I believe that for many of us, our country’s evolution away from its apartheid past seems to have moved at such a hectic pace that even some of the seminal moments marking the birth of our democracy, that are less than two decades old - present themselves in the subconscious mind as being mere chapters in an aging historical record of a distant past.

Periods of a decade and a decade-and-a-half are but fleeting moments in the life of any nation. In our case we have lived through these years conscious of the enormous effort it would require of all of us to unshackle our country from the heavy chains that tie it to its past. We have known that it would take considerable time before we could say we have eradicated the legacy of the past.

We have expected that the circumstances handed down to us by our history would indeed condemn us to a 'petty pace' of progress towards the achievement of the goal of a better life for all.

Programme Director – with municipalities intensely engaged in Ward Committee elections throughout the country – community participation in municipal affairs remains the most critical issue in local government. Experience has shown that community participation is an essential part of effective and accountable governance at local level.

As true drivers and anchors of change in our communities – we must ensure that for us to achieve successful and lasting models of local governance – community participation takes place and is made through the establishment of formal structures and institutionalized frameworks. As members of this organization – we have been empowered on policy framework on partnerships including the involvement of civil society at all spheres of government, primarily local government.

We fully know and can clarify on who the civil society is, its value and its role, understanding of all spheres of government procurement policies, and its implications for civil society's involvement in the delivery of services to communities and the political will of government, particularly the provincial and local sphere of government's ability to involve local communities in service delivery.

We must, as elected office-bearers and with full and clear mandate – be in a position to fully integrate and execute the responsibilities that are bestowed before us. We have been empowered by this organization during our Councillor Induction Programme held in April this year – and this had equipped us with necessary competencies to carry out our duties effectively.

With this meeting – we must at the end of the day be in a position to fully understand issues of governance, ethics in local government, capacity-building, skills development, economic growth and development and municipal finance management. We are expected to be visionary and sanctioned to the infrastructural development of our municipalities.

Issues of sanitation, water, roads, environmental management, communications, social development and primary health care – must be central to our mandate and service delivery list.

While we must indeed celebrate the high levels of optimism that inspire our people, who are convinced that our country has entered its Age of Hope, we must also focus on and pay particular attention to the implications of those high levels of optimism with regard to what we must do together to achieve the objective of a better life for all our people.

We have to respond to the hopes of the people by doing everything possible to meet their expectations. And here I include among those who have to respond to the high expectations of our people not just the government, but also the private sector, the labour unions and the rest of civil society, and patriotic individuals.

We must join hands as three spheres of government and elaborate on the specific interventions that will ensure that the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (ASGISA) succeeds in its purposes – which include the reduction of the unemployment levels in our communities. We should recognize the efforts made by private sector, the trade union movement, women, youth and civil society who have participated in this process, making a valuable input into an important initiative that must be owned and implemented by our people as a whole.

I really hope that you will reach the objectives of this conference – and enjoy the hospitality of this City and its people. I thank you.