

The 2007/8 Budget Speech delivered by Executive Mayor Maphetle Maphetle on Thursday May 29, 2008 at the Madiba Banquette Hall

May 29, 2008

Comrade Speaker;
Deputy Speaker;
Honourable Premier;
Members of the Executive Council;
Esteemed Members of the Legislature;
Leaders of political parties;
Mayors and Councillors;
Speakers and Municipal Managers;
Chief Mahlangu and Chief Kekana;
Members of the Media;
Ladies and Gentlemen

Introduction

We have just passed the half-way mark of the present legislature and its executive. It is also just over a year since the last local government elections. As we journey through the second half of our term of office towards 2009, we recommit ourselves to work towards a local government that is:

- transformed, well capacitated, stable and sustainable;
- accountable, transparent and promoting greater community participation;
- financially viable and sustainable;
- ensures access to basic services and information to communities; and;
- representative of women, youth, people with disability and their interests.

In executing our mandate we have been guided by our constitutional mandate, the lessons of the past two terms and our insights on the challenges facing local government. The five year strategic plan has become our roadmap to keep us focused on building a developmental local government. We are mindful that the citizens of Gauteng will judge us on how we have achieved these ideals.

I therefore stand before you today to account to the House on the progress we have made in these endeavors, the challenges we have faced and to outline the Department's plans as we move forward.

Comrade Speaker;

Our journey began with the conceptualization of innovative ideas to address historical challenges facing municipalities. These challenges related to poor financial management, mounting debt, billing problems, poor revenue generation, transformation challenges, lack of capacity, dearth in technical skills, service delivery backlogs, governance and accountability challenges.

Despite South Africa's middle-income status, half its citizens lack adequate nutrition, water, energy, shelter, healthcare and education. In order to address this 'dismal shame of poverty' (Mbeki, 1996) the new constitution requires that local authorities 'give priority to the basic needs of... and promote the social and economic development of the community'. The challenges municipalities face – segregation, institutional weakness, service backlogs and lack of finance – are to be overcome, according to the *Local Government White Paper* (RSA, 1998a) by establishing 'Developmental Local Government', which will 'work together with local communities to find sustainable ways to meet their needs and improve the quality of their lives'.

Four developmental approaches for local government are contained in the white paper: integrated development planning, service delivery, local economic development and democratisation. These are outlined below, along with analysis of their pro-poor potential and limitations.