

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF TLOKWE
MUNICIPALITY, CNLR A MAPHETLHE – MAPHETLHE AT THE
SALAGA CONFERENCE IN POTCHEFSTROOM IN APRIL 15 –
18, 2008.**

Programme Director, Cllr. J.Douw

Executive Mayors from across the NW Province

MMC's of Finance from all the municipalities present here

Speakers

Municipal Managers

Chief Finance Officers

NW North West representatives

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me once more take this opportunity to thank SALGA in particular in our Province for organising this event, more so let me on behalf of the Tlokwe City Council and the general community of our city extend our humble appreciations for you to have chosen our city for this very important Financial and budgetary event.

Once again, apart from the hard issues that the conference agenda covers, this coming together also gives us an opportune time to inter - mingle and look at those softer issues, to renew contacts and discuss challenges of mutual interest pertaining to our municipalities in the Province.

On the other hand, Programme Director, the macro socio economic environment under which we meet to confer is worth some mention, if not serious consideration.

The current downturn in consumer confidence as experienced nationwide evokes some uncertainty and is bound to impact negatively on households.

This is a result of months of increases in food prices, transport costs as well as interest rates. These aspects of economic management that impact on households need to be in the back of our minds as we are about to finalise our budget processes in our respective municipalities.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it therefore cannot be denied that as we intensify the implementation of our programmes of service delivery we all need to be sensitive to this all - pervading socio economic mood in our country. This is all the more necessary in the context of our Provincial strategic theme of **"Business Unusual: Improved Municipal Budgets"**.

I guess it is important to briefly provide a perspective as to this strategic slogan. In our view this slogan is aimed at making sure that we all get to work and ensure that we come up with municipal budgets that will assist us in delivering effectively on the mandate given to us by our people, the mandate of qualitative and effective service delivery.

In his state of the Nation Address earlier this year the President used this very theme to underscore the fact that it is now time to transcend our habitual common sense of doing 'business as usual' and to infuse a sense of urgency in all of our work as we engage with the immense challenges that face us.

As we prepare for the municipal budgets for 2008/2009 financial year we therefore go in there fully aware of the challenges and the strategic prerogatives we need adopt.

In the final analysis, Programme Director, we gather here this week with a common understanding that collective wisdom is better and can achieve more than an isolated individual initiative. Multilateralism, even at our own level or sphere of government, can achieve much more. No matter how much we can do at an individual municipal level, it is never enough. In the spirit of true co-operation, we in this Province must joint in an action – oriented effort to attack the twin evils of poverty and under – development in our areas.

Let me end Program Director, by once again emphasising on the fact that accordingly, the community of Potchefstroom with all its renowned expertise and hospitality warmly welcomes you all and wishes you fruitful deliberation even as you begin to do your business as 'unusual'.

I THANK YOU!