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**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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**Local Government Communicators called to "walk in the footsteps" of the late Ronnie Mamoepa**

Minister of Communications Ayanda Dlodlo has called on all Municipal Communicators to walk in the footsteps of the late Government Communicator Ronnie Mamoepa and learn from his dedication to the public service.

Mamoepa died in hospital after suffering a stroke. He was 56 years old and has been hailed by many as an excellent communicator, a great friend of the media and an exemplary public servant.

Speaking through video link to over 200 delegates attending the two-day SALGA National Communicators Forum (NCF) in Durban at the International Convention Center, Minister Dlodlo said there should be one message and one voice from the government, directed to the citizens.

"Our message should not only speak about what government is doing to improve the lives of the people and challenges facing our country, but it must also speak about hope and a more prosperous tomorrow."

"These messages must be anchored around the Constitution of the Republic, Government's strategic plan Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF), the National Developmental Plan (NDP), and the President's State of the National Address. The three spheres of government must work together. I expect communicators to write opinion pieces and change the narrative of doom and gloom. As we enter the second phase of the Back to Basics programme, we must profile the good work done by our municipalities," said Minister Dlodlo.

Ethekwini Deputy Executive Mayor Cllr Fawzia Peer said the core mandate of communicators in the public service is to deliver services of the highest quality to the people and bring local government closer to the people. Cllr Peer said "The three basic functions of a government communicator is to inform, persuade and advocate for progressive policies. By having open communication policies for municipalities, we can ensure transparency and enable public input through active participation. The media should play an important role in informing the public and allow citizens to draw their own conclusions."

Cllr Peer said government communicators are not spin doctors but the back bone of the democratic South Africa. She urged the government to embrace social media because of how it has revolutionised the way the world communicates.

SALGA, in partnership with EtheKwini Metro is now hosting the second NCF. The first forum was held in Pretoria and its support has grown.

The NCF brings together Heads of Communications from Municipalities, Heads of Communication from Provincial Departments responsible for Local Government, Heads of Communication from Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs National, SALGA Provincial Communicators' and Marketers, SA Cities Network, Government Communicators Information Systems, Department of Communications and Department of Telecommunications and Postal Services under the theme "Bringing Local Government Closer to the People".

The forum seeks to provide a platform for Municipal Communicators to deliberate on the progress and challenges facing Local Government and further discuss ways on how effective communication can bring about lasting and sustainable solutions to enhance service delivery - through peer learning and sharing of best practices.

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