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## News Release

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### **Speakers draw emphasis on the distinctive nature of local government as deliberations heightened at SALGA National Conference**

As the SALGA conference moves towards a close, deliberations reached a height in various commissions on Thursday, 02 March 2021, at the Cape Town Convention Centre, delegate after delegate unpacking issues and putting forward proposals that will possibly shape the new strategic direction of local government 2022 -2027.

Key to the commissions is to deliberate and bring solutions around financial stability of municipalities and ensure revenue adequacy, the professionalization of local government, reimagining and modernizing of municipal business, innovation and digitization, infrastructure development and investment, economic growth, and developing a well-governed welfare and support system focusing on reviewing remuneration of councilors, skills improvement, among others.

The SALGA National Conference saw seven commissions scattered around the CTICC precinct, and various panelists providing the much-needed insight and expert opinion on local government. Also the delegates did not hold back, engaging and sharing ideas on how local government can achieve financial stability.

Prof Trevor Fowler from Financial Fiscal Commission says while proposals about the funding model of local government were genuine including a proposal from one delegate that remuneration of councillors should come from the national government.

Fowler said when some of the proposals are realized, they should in no way seek to undermine the distinctiveness and interdependence of local government.

“The constitution recognizes the three spheres of government. He who pays the piper calls the tune,” Fowler cautioned.

Fowler said local government should not be at the mercy of the national government to avoid a situation seen in other countries where the national government can easily disband local government and municipalities when they felt like doing so.

Addressing the conference during the official opening on Tuesday, Minister Cooperative Governance & Traditional Affairs Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma also drew attention to the distinctive nature of local government.

“We only have one government with three spheres which are distinctive, interrelated and interdependent. Thus we must continually acknowledge that there is no community that is national, all communities are local, that is why we must all have an interest in local government,” she said.



“Section 154 of the Constitution calls on the national government and provincial governments, by legislative and other measures, [to] support and strengthen the capacity of municipalities to manage their own affairs, to exercise their powers and to perform their functions”, Dlamini Zuma said.

The SALGA National Conference is the gathering of the highest decision-making body within SALGA and takes place just over four months since the local government elections and just over five (5) years since the last meeting of this nature held in December 2016.

SALGA Acting President Cllr Deon De Vos said the conference was meeting under very different circumstances as the sector had to deal with the gapping reality that COVID-19 has brought within society as a whole.

“Not only has this pandemic impacted on every person, sector, business, culture, religion and our entire way of life, but as a people. We’ve had to mourn differently as we laid to rest those closest to us. However, as South Africans we’ve learnt to endure, survive and be resilient,” he said.

The conference will conclude on Friday, 04 March 2022, with the address of the newly elected SALGA President. Deputy President of the Republic David Mabuza is expected to speak at the official closing ceremony as per the conference programme.

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