



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY
ACTING MINISTER FOR COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND
TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS, HONOURABLE NATHI MTHETHWA
AT THE LAUNCH OF THE COUNCILLOR INDUCTION PROGRAMME.
HYATT REGENCY HOTEL, ROSEBANK, JOHANNESBURG
23 JUNE 2011**

Programme Director, SALGA Leadership, Chairperson of the COGTA Portfolio Committee, Executive Mayors, Mayors and Councillors, Traditional Leaders here present, Chairpersons of Entities, Distinguished Guests, Senior Government Officials, Ladies and Gentlemen.

The Councillor Induction Programme (CIP) run by the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) is indeed a monumental milestone in our country's history. It comes against the backdrop of, and is testimony to, a very robust democratic local government election ever held since the advent of democracy in 1994. It also comes against the backdrop of South Africa having recently celebrated the 10th Anniversary of democratic local government in December 2010.

On May 18th 2011, yet another new chapter was scrolled in South Africa's story of a young unfolding democracy. The people of South Africa across race, class and gender, young and old, from urban to rural, came out in their multitudes, at times defiant of adverse weather conditions, to make but one bold and yet profound statement; **"We are taking our future into our own hands!!"**

Most poignant about this day is that it was the birthday of one of the stalwarts of this country's liberation struggle, Tata Walter Sisulu, and South Africans honoured this icon by coming out in their numbers to strengthen and deepen the democracy Cde Walter Sisulu had given his life to. That no less than 57% of the estimated over 22, 7 million eligible voters came out to cast their ballots across the length and breadth of our country on that day is testimony to the fact that the struggle he had dedicated his life to had not been in vain. It was also the day that his life partner and comrade, Mama Albertina Sisulu, had joined these millions of fellow South Africans as she cast what was to be her last ballot in deepening the democracy her family had sacrificed so much for. Less than a month after this honourable mother of the nation had exercised this inalienable right she had fought for, Mama Sisulu passed on, leaving a gaping wound on the nation.

It is indeed clear that the people of our land are growing alive to the fact that the time for taking matters that affect them for granted is over. Be it about service delivery; the fight against crime and corruption; the creation of decent jobs especially at a local level they shall be there and make their voices heard. Equally, when it is about ensuring the provision of decent education and the provision of quality health services for themselves and their children, people are coming forward to make their mark. We can all agree that with this most recent election, the voices of the people were indeed loud and clear: South Africans are saying they are here to make participatory democracy be about themselves, by themselves and for themselves.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this **Councillor Induction Programme (CIP)** we are launching here today should therefore be alive to these voices from our diverse communities out there, and ensure that the newly elected Councillors do indeed live up to the hopes and aspirations that the millions of South African people have entrusted upon them.

As CoGTA, working closely with SALGA and other key stakeholders in the Local Government sector, we remain committed to ensuring that we build **A New Cadre of a Councillor**. When we say that, we simply mean a Cadre who will work smarter, harder and faster to deliver to citizens. A Cadre who will listen, consult, work closely with the communities at all times and a cadre who will respect the importance of continuous two-way communication with communities that have put them in these positions of leadership.

A cadre who is selfless in the service of one's people, who also believes and is guided by the principles of Batho Pele. The one who will not be asking which side is the bread buttered, but where duty lies. We have recently noticed instances where councillors campaign for themselves shamelessly for higher offices. Communities where such individuals hail from should know that these are not the kind of Councillors who have their interests at heart. We need a cadre who above all will live up to the objectives of the Delivery Agreement on Outcome 9: that of achieving a **Responsive, Accountable, Effective and Efficient** Local Governance System!

This is a very valid expectation by our communities and a very achievable one for elected public representatives who are committed to a better life for all! Do not disappoint the people who elected you into

these positions of responsibility because they trusted the party that you represented as the one to deliver on the electoral mandate.

The newly elected Councillors stand in a better place than their predecessors to take us to that better life faster. They have observed and learnt the necessary lessons over the past seventeen years of our democracy; as well as during the 10 years of democratic local government. They are also fortunate in that they come into these positions of responsibility at a time when the government, led by His Excellency, President Jacob Zuma, has made it clear that every public office bearer shall be closely held accountable. Monitoring and evaluation of performance is getting tightened. Accordingly, clearly defined outcomes shall be used to measure Ministers, MEC's, Mayors, and Councillors. Ladies and Gentlemen, accountability is now the name of the game.

Honourable Guests, through the Report on the State of Local Government in South Africa, which CoGTA published in September 2009, we further did a comprehensive diagnosis of the challenges faced by Local Government. We have thus accordingly put in place the **Local Government Turn Around Strategy (LGTAS)** to address those challenges systematically and consistently. The LGTAS interventions are aimed at *restoring the confidence of the majority of citizens* in our municipalities, as the primary expression of the developmental state at a local level.

The objectives of the LGTAS, and at the local level, the MTAS are to:

- Ensure that municipalities meet the **basic service needs** of communities
- Build clean, effective, efficient, **responsive and accountable** local government
- Improve performance and **professionalism** in municipalities
- Improve **national policy, oversight and support**
- Strengthen **partnerships** between local government, communities and civil society

The goal, ladies and gentlemen, is to **rebuild and improve the basic requirements for a functional, responsive, efficient, and accountable developmental local government.**

At a local level, the **Municipal Turn Around Strategies (MTAS)** have been developed and customised to the individual and specific challenges of each municipality. We have also set out clear Outcomes that we seek to achieve by 2014, which have become the Service Delivery Agreement between the President and the CoGTA Minister; the CoGTA Minister and the provincial CoGTA MECs, the MECs and the Mayors.

In essence, we have laid a solid foundation for close cooperation between the various spheres of government to deliver quality services on the basis of a common and shared vision. **It is now time for a Responsive, Accountable, Effective and Efficient Local Government!!** This will determine your performance and the performance of government in delivering to the people!

One of the key pillars of the LGTAS and MTAS is to work towards attaining clean audits by 2014. It therefore becomes crucial that you lead from the front on the "**Operation Clean Audit 2014**" campaign. The campaign will be intensified to promote unqualified audits from every municipality. It is with a sense of pride and joy that we can count a number of municipalities as shining examples of what can be achieved when we work together towards a clean administration. The Ehlanzeni District Municipality, Steve Tshwete Local Municipality and Victor Khanye Local Municipality all in Mpumalanga, the Metsweding District Municipality in Gauteng, Frances Baard District Municipality in the Northern Cape, Fetakgomo Local Municipality in Limpopo and Cape Town in the Western Cape all received Clean Audit reports from the findings of the Auditor-General in the 2009/2010 financial year. The AG even commended the **active leadership role** of Mayors and Councillors in their oversight to improve governance and financial management systems in these municipalities. Nothing stops the rest of the municipalities from achieving the same.

At the national level, the Department will continue to strengthen its relationship with the office of the Auditor General. We will also continue to collaborate with provinces in providing support and monitoring of municipalities to improve their audit outcomes. We would like to assure you all of our unwavering commitment and support which will include training and development programmes for Councillors. We are more than convinced that Working Together We can Do More and shall therefore do all in our power to make sure that indeed Local Government does become Everybody's Business.

Local Government is the sphere that touches our lives from waking up in the morning to when we switch off our lights to go to sleep. It is the coal-face of government performance, and has the potential to either make or break the public perception of their government. This is a mammoth task that our communities have entrusted our councillors with, and for Councillors to succeed, collaboration between all spheres of government, the private sector, other civil society bodies and importantly, our communities is a non-negotiable.

The decisions you make will impact directly on many aspects of our lives, our communities and our local environment, both now and into the future.

We are of the view that this Induction should enhance your knowledge of the sector, increase your awareness and knowledge of the current priorities in line with government priorities and programmes at a broader level; and to also sensitise you to urgent issues of service delivery and infrastructure backlogs.

The Induction Programme should therefore complement and strengthen that knowledge to make your interventions that much more relevant, focused and urgent. We wish you all the best and assure you of our ongoing support as you begin your noble function as servants of our communities around the country.

Ngiyabonga.