

OPENING AND WELCOMING SPEECH BY EXECUTIVE MAYOR  
MOGOBO DAVID MAGABE DURING THE PROVINCIAL  
GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT (PGDS) REVIEW  
VENUE: LOSKOP VALLEY LODGE  
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Programme Director  
Ladies and Gentleman  
Comrades and friends

This important gathering today is a first step by government towards delivering on the mandate that the overwhelming majority of this country has given the ruling party.

As part of its manifesto during the campaign trail for the national elections, the ANC announced that among its objectives would be the need to strengthen the institution of governance, it had identified a need for the establishment of a National Planning Commission.

Processes are currently underway to establish the Commission which would be led by the Minister in the Presidency responsible for planning - Comrade Trevor Manuel.

This gathering comes as part of government's response to the mandate that the majority of South Africans gave the ANC – the mandating party of the current government.

The people have spoken! They have told us categorically that the ANC election manifesto should be policy and this gathering seeks to ensure that is put into action.

Today we are putting the basic idea of establishing the National Planning Commission into practice.

The process of mobilising all South Africans to be part and parcel of coining the national plan began during election time, but today we have taken a giant step forward towards ensuring that we deliver on our promises to the electorate.

From now on, we will have to work very hard and make sure that everything we do in the District and Limpopo province has a bearing to the national goal; it dovetails the local vision to the national agenda.

This gives us a challenge to think deeply and take informed decisions when we plan projects as the District and allocate money. We need to ask ourselves: “Does the money we allocate and spend on projects assist us to achieve the national goal?”

I need not over-emphasise that growth and development, strengthening of government institutions, nation-building and making of a developmental state are long-term goals that need foresighted and proper planning.

A single term is too short a period for the government to complete the project of building a prosperous, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa.

We are all aware that the idea of having the Planning Commission was a result of an introspective process by ourselves, which forced us to admit that despite the significant progress we have made in the past 15 years our government’s weaknesses have been lack of coherent planning and poor co-ordination in all the three spheres of government.

Our society is facing very complex challenges nowadays and the urge to respond to these challenges in an ad hoc and fragmented manner are high with the result that we may expose ourselves to unnecessary risks.

It may seem that as Greater Sekhukhune District Municipality we might have jumped the gun, because we have already done some spade work as far as long-term planning is concerned.

I am however glad that as we meet here today, a visionary process for developing the District’s 2025 Growth and Development Strategy began a few years back and we are

therefore almost ready to immediately align our efforts with the objectives of the National Planning Commission.

We will have to devise a way that will ensure that the people of Sekhukhune are deeply involved in our planning processes, our District plans are synergised with the Provincial Growth and Development Strategy and the National Plans.

The document tells us that the pillars of the economy of this District are Mining, Agriculture and Tourism.

We decided to commission a research into these sectors to assess their development potential, probability of projects coming to fruition, their job creation potential and what impediments needed to be removed in order to unlock potential.

Although the research points to a number of challenges, it however indicates that there are huge opportunities for our people that have not been discovered in these sectors.

For example, the research found that agriculture in the District had a potential in the construction of abattoirs, feedlots, production of bio-fuels (from plants such as soya, sorghum, sunflower) , dry land crop growing and livestock farming (cattle and goats).

However, the research indicated that all these potential projects could be hampered by lack of water due to unpredictable rainfall and many people could not farm as they would like because over half of our land in the district is classified as communal land which in itself presents us with huge legal challenges if land has to be transferred to aspirant farmers.

This means most of the arable land we have cannot be leveraged for capital.

We should not however be oblivious to the fact that we inherited a legacy of disparity in the agricultural sector that has

created a huge gap between commercial and subsistence farmers.

This research tells us that all the requirements for successful production are present – namely – land, labour, capital and technology and skills. What is needed is correct institutional structuring that will help us realise the potential.

On Wednesday, I had a meeting with representatives from mining companies that operate in the district which was a first step in forging relationships and exploring partnerships.

Sekhukhune is undoubtedly having an abundance of mineral deposits so the issue of mining cannot be sidestepped as it is going to haunt us for many years to come.

We felt that there is an urgent need for the mining companies, government and communities to reach common ground as they are all affected and interested parties in this regard.

The aim of the meeting had one purpose - to assist our people to benefit. More than 30 mines operate in the district, but the question we need to ask ourselves is: Are our people really benefitting?

We are taking cognisance of the fact that mining is a national competence, but these activities are taking place in our communities.

I am pleased to say that the meeting agreed in principle that we have to establish a co-ordinating multi-stakeholder structure that will deal with all the problems and challenges in the sector especially the persistent confrontations between mines and communities.

We hope the process which we have started to establish the Sekhukhune Mining Economic Forum will be expedited, and relationships will be harmonised.

The research I referred to earlier on was, before the advent of the global economic meltdown, forecasting that employment in

the mining industry within Sekhukhune was going to double in 2015.

With the economy likely to recover in the few years, we can only hope that these forecasts will become a reality and that our communities will benefit from all the mining activities taking place on their land.

We can also hope that beneficiation of these minerals will happen right here in Sekhukhune so that we can broaden the scope for the benefit of our communities in the mineral wealth that is found in this district.

The research also indicates that we can tap into the Tourism potential of the District and create many job and entrepreneurial opportunities for our people.

I am happy that three months ago we issued an advertisement to develop De Hoop Dam and also link Tsate Heritage Site.

I am also glad that we have taken a few steps in this regard in Sekhukhune by establishing the Regional Tourism Association last year, which will solely devise ways and means of developing this sector.

According to the research, Sekhukhune has a great potential in benefiting from tourism initiatives such as Family Recreation Cluster, Special Interest Cluster (birding, fishing, culture and heritage, mountain biking and 4x4 trails), Mega-Conservation Cluster, Golf and Game Cluster; and lastly the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conference and Events) Cluster.

Programme Director, let me also mention that over and above the Mining Forum - we are also going to establish the Agriculture Forum as well as the Tourism Forum to ensure that we seek opportunities for our people in these sectors.

Thank you.

