

MEDIA STATEMENT

THE NATIONAL STATE OF SERVICE DELIVERY DIALOGUE

27 February 2025

The National Planning Commission (NPC) convened the National State of Service Delivery Dialogue on 25-26 February 2025 at the DALRRD offices in Pretoria. The NPC collaborated with the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME), the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), the University of KwaZulu Natal and the United Nations in South Africa.

As the independent advisory body appointed by the President and the custodian of South Africa's National Development Plan: Vision 2030 (NDP), the NPC's approach to service delivery was based on Chapter 13 of the NDP. The national state of service delivery dialogue was attended by a rich diversity of key stakeholders, including, local government entities, NGOs, municipalities, the South Africa office of the UN, government departments, traditional leaders, academics, statisticians and mayors.

The objectives of the dialogue included, amongst others, the following:

- To probe and quantify the current state of service delivery in the country
- To explore ways of expediting service delivery
- To explore partnerships between the citizenry, government and the private sector in order to improve the quality, speed and scale of service delivery
- To seek ways of equalising service delivery gaps from one area to another and between the rural and urban centres

Commissioner Magidimisha, who spearheaded the NPC's analysis of the service delivery challenges between rural and urban areas, encouraged all participants to be frank in their discussions, not to blame but to find workable solutions to the issues of rural development and service delivery.

Leaning on Chinua Achebe's 1983 classic titled *The Trouble with Nigeria*, the Deputy Chairperson of the NPC, Professor Tinyiko Maluleke, dubbed service delivery "the trouble with South Africa" today. Nevertheless, he urged the participants not to give up the fight for faster and better service delivery.

In her keynote address, the chairperson of the NPC, Minister Maropene Ramokgopa outlined the rationale for the intense two-day discussions by stating, 'Section 152 of the Constitution sets out the objectives and responsibilities of local government for ensuring sustainable service delivery to communities while section 195 requires public administration to be development-oriented and fair.'

Minister Ramokgopa acknowledged persistent challenges, particularly in rural areas, where disparities in service access remain. Calling for innovative solutions, she outlined the role of the NDP and the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP), the AU's Agenda 2063 as well as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals in helping the country to address South Africa's unique challenges.

The Director-General of DPME, Dr Robert Nkuna, shared lessons from 30 years of democracy, insights from the Local Government Management Improvement Model, and the challenges of rural development and service delivery as he stressed the importance of coordination and oversight of medium and short-term planning with the NDP, ongoing tracking of implementation and progress, evaluation that informs planning, monitoring, as well as budget prioritisation.

In its intervention, the DALRRD noted the critical timing of the dialogue and emphasised the urgent need to cease working in silos by using the MTDP to coordinate the various efforts to improve the lives of citizens in the rural areas.

Other key presentations were made by such stakeholders as Statistics South Africa, SALGA, the Departments of Human Settlements, Cooperative Governance, and Agriculture, Rural Development, and Land Affairs. The Dialogue included an in-depth

focus on the underlying challenges related to planning, skills deficits, migration, and infrastructure backlogs and funding challenges.

As well as committing to providing feedback to all the participants, the NPC undertook to use the insights gained at the dialogue to craft an advisory note to government on the state of service delivery in the country as well as the measures needed to improve the situation.

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