



MINISTRY IN THE PRESIDENCY: REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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OPENING OF THE NATIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION LEKGOTLA

2 DECEMBER 2022

- Deputy Chairperson of the NPC, Prof Maluleke
- Members of the National Planning Commission,
- Acting Secretary of the NPC, Dr Masiteng
- Director General for DPME, Dr Robert Nkuna
- Members of the NPC Secretariat
- All officials from Presidency and DPME

A warm welcome to this special meeting of the National Planning Commission.

We are faced with numerous challenges both domestic and international, and vary from having a political basis while others relate to our standing, from a general perspective.

The National Planning Commission stands above any and all issues in its operational and guidance mandate. First and foremost, it **MUST** be a trusted state body that is also trusted by our people, from across all sectors, whether private, public or civil society.

I want to commend the commissioners for your courage to review and reflect authentically. Even though you were appointed barely a year ago, having a Lekgotla, after twelve months of actual work says to me that this NPC is determined to make a difference when it comes to this country's trajectory.

Your approach in the midst of a government that simply says, 'It's business as usual' while our challenges pile up, comforts me, and is reassuring to our people, because we are very far off from being 'business as usual' – it is not right, for example, that investment in our country is being determined by the extent of the high levels of crime, of GBV, of corruption.

Crime is in fact a component of economic warfare.

The Minister as the Chairperson of the NPC has spoken to you previously about the criminal core that is preventing the functioning of Eskom bring our country to its knees.

I am not expecting you, the NPC, to take over the work of the NDP, but in taking this bold step of assessing the progress made with its implementation on the targets and goals, it would naturally be important that you look at the factors that have interfered with reaching those goals, objectives and targets.

In the case of economic sabotage, we must ask, who benefits?

In whose interests is it to see the country fail?

And we **MUST DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT!!!**

We **MUST** arrest and prosecute perpetrators.

It is important that bodies like the NPC, using your expertise, takes a high-level view to analyse the underlying causes of these actions, and hold accountability frameworks in place for lack of action. We will not progress beyond just constantly putting out fires until we understand who is lighting the match, and who owns the matchbox.

Our National Development Plan is very clear on its three (3) main objectives:

- reduce unemployment
- eradicate poverty
- and reduce inequality

These speak to a strong economy, because a weakened economy affects not only poverty and employment levels but the ability of the state to provide an adequate safety net. What the state does with its resources bears further scrutiny by the National Planning Commission. Here, again, it is important, that the NPC takes an approach that moves away from business as usual.

We must have a state that is agile, a state that is resilient and a state that can respond to the actual needs of the people.

At the November plenary meeting of the NPC, you spoke about Cabinet's approval of the National Implementation Framework towards the Professionalisation of the Public Service. For this framework to make a big difference in the quality of public service, it is crucial that, as with all policy, that it is actually implemented and it is implemented properly.

The irony is that we expect the public service to implement a strategy which if it were operating optimally, would not be required at all.

One of our other biggest challenges is of social cohesion.

Many of you will be aware that one of the vexing debates that the ruling party had during its liberation struggle period was what we called ‘the National question’. Madiba, as our first President set the tone by not only embodying the spirit of reconciliation but through his actions strived to foster reconciliation. You will all remember the tea and koeksisters with Betsy Verwoerd!

But the process of Social Cohesion must, and I want to stress this, it must be accompanied by economic and social upliftment.

That is one component, though.

The other is to change attitudes, and that means a change in the way we behave, and this is where the NPC is well-positioned to change hearts and heads. To build and maintain that trust, it is very important that the NPC continues to take the frank and candid approach to its communications that it has been doing.

I want to appeal to you to take that same candid approach in your deliberations over the next day and a half. There is no point in coming together like this to simply have another plenary meeting. You **must** confront the gaps and the weaknesses, for the benefit of our country, our people. I expect this lekgotla to rise above the fray and focus on solutions.

I also anticipate that the global challenge of climate change will emerge. The effects of climate change sit at the heart of many of the development

agenda issues being faced by developing countries. Changing weather patterns do not only result in disasters like floods, droughts, or wildfires, impacting our food through farming shifts, especially subsistence farming, migration and movement, health, and many more – but the climate change poverty discussion needs to be had in our country, and I task you as the NPC to lead this discussion.

While South Africa is in the advantageous position of being able to make the transition to a more sustainable environment, how we leverage our natural resources sustainably is going to be central to our economic growth and development, specifically the President's ERRP, ensuring that our state is agile enough, and ensuring that we use the opportunity to redress past imbalances.

On that note, let's talk about the DDM.

The District Development Model (DDM) was adopted as the implementation model to improve service delivery to citizens by co-ordinating all planning and budgeting initiatives at a district level.

The genius of the DDM is in its convergent approach, where national, provincial and local government priorities are consolidated into ONE Plan.

As a District Development Champion (DDM) for Fezile Dabi DM myself, I have had first-hand experience of formulating resolutions, and I personally requested a meeting to create a vision in dealing with poverty in the long-term transformation perspective for DDM ONE Plan that should be achieved in the strategies we want to see. I further emphasised the importance of participation and collaboration, and that the process needs to encourage, develop, maintain and sustain, ***by leaving no one behind.***

Role players in the Economic Development field should also critically assess our economic empowerment and financial models, and constantly review or improve areas of policy that are not driving the eradication of poverty and therefore not beneficial to our people – “why are they still there?” is a question I want you to ask.

I wish you a successful Lekgotla. Ten years since the adoption of this plan marks a very opportune time for the whole of society to reflect.

I believe your 10-year review should lead a developmental discourse in the fight against poverty, inequality and unemployed.

May you have a peaceful end to 2022, and a better 2023.

I thank you.