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CHAIRPERSON OF THE NATIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (NPC)

NATIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION STRATEGIC LEKGOTLA

DATE: 1 - 2 MARCH 2024

VENUE: HOLIDAY INN, OR TAMBO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Deputy Chairperson of the National Planning Commission, Professor
Tinyiko Maluleke,

Commissioners of the Third National Planning Commission,

The Acting Deputy Secretary of the National Planning Commission, Mr.
Ashraf Kariem,

Director General and Senior officials of the Department of Planning,
Monitoring and Evaluation,

Members of the Secretariat,

Facilitators from the Government Technical Advisory Centre (GTAC).

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am pleased to officially welcome you all to the National Planning Commission's Strategic Lekgotla which is convened under the theme: *National Planning Commission (NPC): Taking The NDP Forward*. The Lekgotla takes place during a politically charged period in our country with the approaching end of the 6th administration, the upcoming 7th National and Provincial elections on 29 May 2024, and more notably, the

celebration of 30 years of freedom and democracy. Equally, during this period, the current NPC observes its halfway mark since it took up office in 2021.

The year 2024 represents a critical milestone in our country's history as we reflect and celebrate 30 years of our democratic dispensation. Part of this journey of reflection requires that we critically engage in the performance of the state and society more broadly in responding to the pressing developmental needs of our people. Along the journey of building a democratic society, we have been empowered with key development plans and programmes including the Freedom Charter of 1955, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of 1994, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) of 1996, the National Development Plan (NDP) of 2012, and the Medium Term Strategic Frameworks under each administration amongst several others.

Therefore, we are convinced and have evidence to prove that South Africa today is completely different from the South Africa we inherited in 1994.

Our road to democracy is one characterized by years of struggle, resistance, resilience, and unity under a common agenda for the liberation of our people. We must never find ourselves trivializing the hard-earned gains of our young democracy, instead, we must find ways collectively to

defend and advance these gains for the Tintswalos and many before and after her. It is against this backdrop that today's programme includes a briefing on the progress made through the Thirty-Year Review of South Africa's Democracy led by the DPME

The review requires that we tackle difficult, yet necessary provocations:

- How do we build on the progress made in improving the livelihoods of the people?
- What strategies can we consider to strengthen the institutions and systems we have developed to respond to socio-economic, political, and geographical shocks?
- How does South Africa leverage its growing international influence to drive forward domestic imperatives?
- What key reforms are needed to ensure our country's economic growth is inclusive, transformative, and redistributive?
- How can we recalibrate our planning systems so that they can better serve our country?

These difficult questions require answers that I believe this NPC can contribute to. Over the Lekgotla I am challenging us all to reinvigorate and be intentional about the transformative role the NPC must play in driving the country's developmental agenda forward; and suggest other ways through which the NPC can make more impact and assist in planning

Programme director,

We actively position and weigh in on the advisory mandate of NPC to develop short to long-term solutions to dealing with contemporary and emerging challenges including; economic growth through foreign direct investment, addressing the pervasive nature of corruption and its impact on the credibility and trust of public institutions, energy and water security, improving the standard of living for our people whilst cognisant of the fiscal constraints, infrastructure development with a focus on rail and port infrastructure to support our logistics network, repurposing SOEs in order to advance a developmental agenda and the impact of budgetary processes on the overall planning machinery of the country.

We must also look at the state of the 35-45 population cohort, who are the cohort immediately before Tintswalos. This cohort would have benefitted from the youth focussed development programmes rolled out by the government in the last thirty years and it would be valuable to assess their state of socio-economic wellbeing to assess the impact of these programmes.

All these are matters that can and must be addressed.

Fellow Commissioners,

As we approach the end of the 6th administration, we must be able to interrogate, plan, and develop mitigation strategies that are associated with a transition of this nature.

The lekgotla should also reflect on what can still be done towards the end of this term, including reflecting on the impact of budget cuts on the government priorities that are already in place.

South Africa today is faced with a political environment that is charged, and if not managed properly, it has the potential to diminish democratic gains. During the Lekgotla I urge that the NPC engage on the impact of coalition governments on the provision and accessibility of basic services, the development and maintenance of public infrastructure, and the ability to implement key legislation and policies aimed at building better lives for our people.

We also need to robustly engage in the disjuncture between local and national government and its impact on the populace, particularly the poor and working class in terms of the provision of basic services including access to clean water. What do we think should change with regards to local government?

I bring these challenges to the NPC because I trust in the collective strength of this commission to provide direction to inform the Executive and President.

Fellow Commissioners,

This Lekgotla provides us with an opportunity to reflect internally on the affairs of the commission. The impact of budget cuts on the NPC and its mandate is an item that requires a great deal of engagement and consensus. We must consider how you, like all other entities that are funded by the state, will produce innovative ways of meeting your mandate focusing on the two components including;

- 1) The NPC is expected to provide evidence-based advice on futuristic national planning and foresight scenario planning to implement the plan towards 2030 better.
- 2) The NPC must assist in forging a conversation among key stakeholders, leading to effective and impactful social compacts on several key issues facing the country. This includes working within the budgetary restrictions and most importantly, using your convening power to make sure that all stakeholders support the processes. We cannot succeed unless we all pull together in the same direction.

In conclusion,

The task ahead is not an easy one. I am making a clarion call that the NPC must be creative and strategic in ensuring that the remainder of its tenure is impactful and able to move the needle on key developmental targets as enlisted in the NDP. The NDP is fast approaching its chronological end by 2030 and we need to lead South Africa in asking; What next? In this regard the NPC has a crucial role to play in driving the country's development agenda forward.

I wish you all the best in this Lekgotla.

Let's do more, together.

I thank you.