

**CLOSING REMARKS AND OVERVIEW OF THE FIRST DAY OF THE
NCOP 2022 LOCAL GOVERNMENT FOCUS WEEK**

**CHIEF WHIP OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES, THE
HON SEISO MOHAI, ANC MP**

TUESDAY, 13 SEPTEMBER 2022

Programme Director;

Honourable Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces,
Honourable Amos Masondo;

The Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP, Honourable Sylvia Lucas;

Honourable Minister of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs,
Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma;

The Deputy Minister of COGTA, Honourable Obed Bapela;

Representatives of the Organized Local Government, the South African
Local Government Association;

Distinguished Special Delegates;

The Auditor General of South Africa, Madam Maluleke;

Our distinguished panelists and experts;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is indeed a great honour on my part for being granted the privilege to
close this auspicious gathering, the 2022 NCOP Local Government
Week;

Programme Director allow me to join the hon Minister, citing the late former President Nelson Mandela that; local government is a critical sphere of government that is located at the coal face of service delivery and community participation as articulated in section 153 of the Constitution.

As the Honourable Minister has correctly said; the decay and collapse of our system of local government cannot be treated as an isolated issue from other spheres of government, but a manifestation of the collapse of the entire government.

It is against this background that the central question of national and provincial support to local government have dominated the discussions today.

Accordingly, when we speak of building a capable, ethical and accountable local government, enhanced oversight and accountability to address audit and financial pitfalls, the professionalisation of local government and good governance, oversight and accountability in coalition governments, we are speaking to the theme of the national and provincial support to local government.

Professionalisation of local government sector will assist in developing a benchmark or standard at which we want our municipalities to function. This was well captured by Prof. Nico Steydler in his presentation.

Programme Director; oversight and accountability has also dominated our discussions today. Through various presentations and inputs, it has become clear that as a critical sphere of governance, local government is overseen by multiple entities with different mandates and focus.

The critical question is how do we ensure integration, coordination and synergy between different stake holders that have a critical oversight

role in local government. As the former President Thabo Mbeki said; the constitution locates the NCOP at the intersection of the three spheres of our system of governance, thus giving it the possibility to forge co-operative governance and intergovernmental relations.

Ideally, this locates the NCOP in a better position to coordinate all the key actors which play a critical role in the oversight of the local government. In his input, Honourable Dodovu has set the tone in his proposal of the NCOP Local Government Sector Oversight and Accountability Model.

This model should speak to the convergence between the Auditor General, the Municipal Public Account Committees, the South African Local Government Association, Provincial Legislatures, and the National and Provincial Government.

We have heard expert opinions about the policy and legislative gaps that continue to undermine the transformative and developmental capacity of local government. This is more acutely pronounced in the domain of professional, ethical and performance management system as various speakers have alluded to.

Programme Director, this gathering have also noted the fundamental shift in the political landscape of South Africa occasioned by the shifting political allegiances of the electorate. This shift has in turn necessitated the coalitions in local government and relegation of the dominant party into the opposition bench in some municipalities.

Key among the common factors that permeate all the contributions on this topic are:

- (i) recognition of coalition governments as a new practice and reality with no prior experience in South Africa which accounts for instabilities;
- (ii) The poor accountability and sensitivity of the political parties to the interests and aspirations of the electorate;
- (iii) Coalitions not predicated on the broad social contract with the electorate against which the performance of the individual parties and the coalitions broadly can be measured;
- (iv) Political culture of patronage that undermines political ethics and accountability across the political parties.

Related to the culture of political patronage is the widespread culture of political interference in the administration, especially as it relates to procurement and appointment of senior personnel. This has become even a bargaining political point between political parties in the negotiations around coalitions.

Programme Director, as we proceed to grapple with the fundamental questions of governance, we must always be guided by the vision of the Freedom Charter, that; *“No government that can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of the people”*.

This injunction which finds expression in the constitution enjoins us to put our people at the center of policy planning, implementation, oversight and monitoring and evaluation. Few speakers have made reference to the critical issue of situating our communities at the beach head of oversight and accountability.

We have statutory structures like Ward Committees that should play critical role in municipal oversight and accountability. We need to infuse this critical element in our re-imagination of the municipal oversight and accountability as move forward.

Programme Director, some of the issues that have sharply arisen today will be further deliberated in the themes for tomorrow and will be consolidated into integrated summary and way forward as we close tomorrow.

Allow me therefore to close by acknowledging and expressing our thanks to the Minister, our panelists and all the honourable members to today's discussions. I also wish all of you safe journey back home especially those who are travelling.

Thank you