



**COGHSTA**

**Department of Cooperative Governance  
Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs  
NORTHERN CAPE**

**MEC BENTLEY VASS OPENING REMARKS AT THE OCCASION  
OF THE HOSTING OF THE SPECIAL MUNIMEC MEETING**

**Date: Wednesday, 19 February 2025**

**Venue: Springbok Guest Farm, (Namakwa District)**

**Time: 13:00**

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\*The Executive Mayor of the Namakwa District Municipality – Councillor Cloete, thank you for welcoming us to the District and for your remarks.\*

The Provincial Chairperson of SALGA, Councillor Lulamile Nkumbi, your Deputies, and the Leadership of SALGA, present,

\*All District Executive Mayors, Executive Mayors and Mayors,\*

All Councillors Present, representing different Municipalities, Municipal Managers, and Senior Managers Present,

All Executive and Senior Managers of the Department of COGHSTA, and all the Officials Present,

Representatives of the Municipal Demarcation Board, State Security Agency, SALGA and all our Local Government Eco-System Partners,

Members of the Media Present, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good Afternoon and Welcome to this Special MUNIMEC.

This MUNIMEC, is on the back of the recent State of the Nation Address by President Cyril Ramaphosa, delivered in Parliament early this month.

I attended the SONA and was particularly happy with the pronouncements by the President as they related to Local Government.

The President said, and I quote

“Starting this year, we will work with our municipalities to establish professionally managed, ring-fenced utilities for water and electricity services to ensure that there is adequate investment and maintenance”.

Close quote.

I am sure we will all agree Colleagues that the huge debts we owe to water boards and to Eskom, is a serious cause for concern.

Pursuing this objective of establishing professionally managed, ring-fenced utilities to water and electricity services, will go a long way to addressing some of our challenges.

In that same address to the Nation, President Ramaphosa also said that we must undertake extensive consultation to develop an updated White Paper on Local Government to outline a modern and fit-for-purpose local government system, and to review the funding model for municipalities as many of them do not have a viable and sustainable revenue base.

\*Councillor Nkumbi\*, I am sure we can all agree that indeed the funding model for municipalities has been an issue we have raised at every opportunity, and collectively, we must play an active part in this process.

\*Colleagues\*, we gather here today for this Special MUNIMEC, to discuss critical issues around our work.

With only nine (9) days left ahead of the registration deadline for the spaza shops and small businesses within our Municipalities, we will want to take stock of how we have fared thus far.

On 31 January, I released a reminder media statement to our communities across the Province, to remind them of this important deadline.

I have noted that a few Municipalities have actively called our businesses to action and mobilised them to register ahead of this deadline.

\*Executive Mayor Cloete\*, we must remember why this registration process is important.

We must not forget that this was one of the important measures adopted by the government following the deaths of children due to food-borne illnesses.

We said as government we must ensure compliance intervention on the regulation of spaza shops and food handling businesses.

\*How far are we, Mayors?\*

\*How many spaza shops have registered and how many are still not registered?\*

\*And are we ready to deal with the unregistered spaza shops within our municipalities, after the deadline to safeguard the lives of our children and consumers of food and other items sold at these spaza shops?\*

As we expect small businesses and spaza shops to register, we had also put an obligation on the Municipalities, to pass the Standard By-Laws to regulate the operations of spaza shops. Have we progressed with regard to this, or are we still allowing for a vacuum to exist in terms of the laws that must be strengthened.

We will receive a report on this as well, during this meeting.

The other presentation and engagement we will get into is with regard to the Security Clearance or vetting as we will normally call it, for Municipal Managers and Directors reporting directly to the Municipal Managers, which will be presented to us by the State Security Agency.

In this meeting we will also receive a presentation by the Municipal Demarcation Board – MDB – with regard to the Ward Configuration Process.

Those of you who attended the Upington MUNIMEC in October, will remember that the MDB was afforded an opportunity to present at that meeting.

We have called them again to present because we want to encourage Municipalities to not be left behind.

I said in Upington, be available to participate, let us not wake up in 2026 and want to complain about this ward or the other that we feel was not configured properly.

The MDB have a number of steps and processes that they follow to arrive at a conclusion about any ward, but we must play an active role in this process, whilst allowing them to do what they are mandated to do as well.

As Municipalities we must work with the MDB to mobilise our communities to be aware of the visits to our Municipalities by the MDB, and to encourage community participation as well.

Colleagues, the issue of the spending on the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) continues to be a challenge in some of the Municipalities.

There are a number of Municipalities however that are doing their best to spend 100% of their MIG.

When the President spoke about a need to review the funding model for Local Government in the SoNA, we must equally be up to the challenge to say, when we receive our allocations, are we ready to spend on these allocations and grants to the maximum benefit of our communities.

We cannot have dilapidated and crumbling infrastructure in our Municipalities, then you are allocated the MIG, then you do not utilise it to the last cent. There is no positive correlation in such a situation.

So \*Advocate Manyeneng\*, will present us that picture later during our meeting, and let us have an open and frank discussion on this matter so that we are able to assist each other where there are areas of concern that needs attention.

We are also going to get a report from our colleague from SALGA with regard to the Token Identifier (TIDs) or the process that we embarked on to register Smart Metres across the Country.

We will zoom into the progress that was made, there are still a few Municipalities that have not reached 100% on their spending, we must talk about interventions in this regard.

\*Mr Dean Kaye\* will present on the Revenue Enhancement, assurance and alternative electricity generation and this is an important discussion that we must also engage on as Municipalities.

So I know that there are a number of other issues that are burning, but we will create a platform for these when we host our regular MUNIMEC at a later stage, but for today, given the time constraints, I will plead with you that we focus only on those Special items, that I have identified to discuss these thoroughly.

Working with Cabinet, we have agreed that before the end of March, we must have hosted a Northern Cape Local Government Summit. The COGHSTA team is busy finalising the related logistics and formal communication will be sent to you about the Summit.

This Summit will give us an opportunity to engage on a wide range of issues affecting Local Government, so I urge all of you gathered here, to attend that Summit when we invite you later.

Some of you might already be aware that the President has communicated with the Premier that he has appointed the District Development Model National Champions for your respective Districts.

\*Executive Mayor Buda\*, the National Champion for Frances Baard District is \*Deputy Minister, Nonceba Mhlauli\*.

\*Executive Mayor Mogatle-Thoane\*, the National Champion for JTG is \*Deputy Minister Alvin Botes\*,

For the Namakwa District, \*Executive Mayor Cloete\*, your National Champion is \*Deputy Minister Sello Seitlholo\*,

For Pixley Ka Seme District, \*Executive Mayor Itumeleng\*, it is \*Minister Pieter Groenewald\* and for the ZFM District, \*Executive Mayor Basson\*, it is \*Deputy Minister Samantha Graham-Mare\*.

We are finalising the Provincial Champions for each District and this will be communicated soon to all of you, so that we roll up our sleeves and working together as all the three spheres of government we are able to improve coordination and alignment between the different spheres.

This is an important initiative to improve planning, budgeting and implementation at a local level by bringing together government and stakeholders towards uplifting our communities.

As I conclude \*Colleagues\*, when we say that Local Government is at the coalface of service delivery, it must not just be a slogan.

We must take this as an important statement because this is the sphere of government that our communities interact with on a daily basis and they expect good quality services.

We must collectively ensure that we are up to the task and up to the expectations of our communities.

We must work together to ensure that we make our Municipalities successful, and that they work for our communities.

I trust that our deliberations here this afternoon will be positive and meaningful so that we come with immediate solutions to whatever challenges we might be aware of and that the colleagues in the presentations will raise.

Equally let us also applaud the good work that most of you are doing, because there are indeed pockets of excellence and we must celebrate those, and not always look at the negatives.

With those few words, this meeting is officially opened and I know that we will all be in this room for the full duration of this meeting and we will actively participate.

I thank you!