

**Welcoming remarks by Gauteng MEC for Human Settlements, Urban Planning, Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Lebogang Maile on the occasion of the Local Government Summit, 27 September 2022 at Birchwood Hotel.**

**Theme: The DDM in Action: Towards an Ideal Municipality**

Honourable Ministers

Honourable Premier

Honourable MECs

Honourable Members of Parliament and MPLs

Honourable Mayors and MMCs

Chairperson of the National House of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders

President of SALGA

Distinguished Guests

Members of Media

All Protocol Observed

Local economic development to empower communities, improved service delivery at municipal level and institutional stability at the local government sphere are critical factors if we are ever going to win the battle against high unemployment, make a significant dent in reducing poverty levels in society and broaden economic participation through an engaged citizenry who will not just be reduced to being passive recipients within the service delivery value chain, but will also be pro-active partners and active participants and empowerment beneficiaries within the service delivery value chain.

As we gather together to deliberate on how best we can implement the District Development Model in order to ensure optimal developmental outcomes for communities and society at large and to improve the performance of our municipalities with the aim of contributing positively and meaningfully to our

human development index as a country, we must challenge ourselves to think outside the box, along the lines of these famous words uttered by George Bernard Shaw in his play *Man and Superman*, *“The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man.”*

To fix the problems of local government in this country, we need to become “unreasonable people” as local government practitioners and stakeholders. It cannot continue to be more of the same, business as usual. We must adopt this attitude that is lauded by George Bernard Shaw in the quote just referenced, we have to be unreasonable people who seek to bend the world to their will, who seek to transform organisations and institutions so that these institutions and organisations become servants, enablers, promoters of our common objective of a better life for all.

As a government of revolutionary democrats who have a vested interest in changing the status quo and bringing about a new dispensation within South African society that will create a better life and prospects for all South Africans and not just an elite minority, we have to become “unreasonable people” who stubbornly seek to adapt the world to our agenda and progressive ideals and the place where this is best achieved is at local government level.

Our obsession is not with having more talk shops and endless discussions, but rather we want to qualitatively transform the lives of communities, so as we deliberate about various issues that are impacting on our performance at local government level: how to strengthen municipal finances and increase investment at municipal level; climate change and sustainable development; spatial transformation; urbanisation and its effects; capital expenditure, maintenance and municipal infrastructure, coalition arrangements and municipal governance as well as stability, service delivery and quality of life, the District Development Model and local economic development, building disaster resilient communities and cities within a 21<sup>st</sup> century framework; I hope we prove to be the kind of “unreasonable people” that George Bernard Shaw talks about, because it is only such people who can bring about progress in society and the world.

We want to wish you all fruitful, lively, and ultimately impactful and transformative engagements at this local government summit because the progress of our communities, of South African society at large and our future prospects as a country, will depend on whether we can get local government right or not.

We must fix governance and service delivery within the local government sphere, but ultimately when all of that is functioning as it should, we must look at developmental indices for local government that are in line with our revolutionary socio-economic transformation agenda. May you be “unreasonable” over the next two days.

THANK YOU!!!