

**Opening Remarks by Minister Dlamini Zuma at the 2022 Local
Government Summit
Birchwood Hotel, Boksburg, Gauteng
27 September 2022**

Programme Director,
Cabinet Ministers and Deputy Ministers here present,
Premiers and Members of the Provincial Executive Councils,
Executive Mayors, Mayors, Speakers and Chief Whips
Heads of Missions and members of the diplomatic corps,
Directors General and Heads of Departments,
Municipal Managers, Chief Financial Officers and Directors,
Members of the media,
Ladies and gentlemen.

Allow me to first extend our warm welcome to everyone who is joining us today physically and virtually, in this Local Government Summit. It has been sometime since we last gathered in this manner and fashion. The last substantive Summit the sector had was in September 2014, wherein we adopted the “*Statement of Intent*” to implement the Back-to-Basics Programme. Since then, we have implemented the programme through national and provincial Departments as well as the Municipal Infrastructure Support Agency (MISA).

Recently, we have experienced setbacks in some of the key areas we had recorded progress in as result of Covid-19 Pandemic, droughts, floods, and global political economy dynamics, such as the conflict in Ukraine.

Nonetheless, we intend to use these next two days to take score of the progress and challenges we have thus far recorded. We shall also use this opportunity to reimagine our beautiful nation's future. In reimagining we will pay attention to our localities with a view of building "*resilient, sustainable, prosperous, connected, cohesive, non-sexist, non-racial and climate smart communities*". Fundamental to this vision is the role of the local government which according to section 152 of the Constitution is to:

- Provide democratic and accountable government for local communities,
- Ensure provision of services to communities in a sustainable way,
- Promote social and economic development,
- Promote a safe and healthy environment, and
- Encourage involvement of communities and community organisations in local development

In fulfilling this mandate, we must recall the words of President Nelson Mandela, who during the 1996 National Summit for Organised Local Government, said:

"You have the task of doing whatever is necessary to ensure that our new local government system serves the needs of our communities. You have the responsibility to make their voice heard and to provide an effective instrument for them to improve their lives."

This is the type of leadership and ideal municipality should display. It is our hope that this Summit will provide elaborative features and bottom lines for such a municipality.

We are also ever conscious, as is section 154 of the Constitution that local government cannot do all this alone. It will require an all of government and society approach. Therefore section 154 calls on the “*national and provincial spheres to... support and strengthen the capacity of municipalities to manage their own affairs, to exercise their powers and perform their functions*”. The District Development Model (DDM) is a coordination and integration approach, which seeks to break silos and mobilise all of government and society in planning, budgeting, and implementing as one.

To this end, in this Summit we have invited colleagues from other national departments, organs of state and state entities, as well as the provincial departments of COGTA and the Treasuries. There is also much to learn from our friends here on the continent and beyond, thus we thank the United Nations and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) as well as the missions of the People’s Republic of China and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, for their willingness to share experiences with us. Because of the “*all of society approach*” we have also called in our academia, civil society, religious, institutions of traditional leadership, private sector as well as youth and women’s organisations.

Programme Director, as we draw lessons and gather directives, we must pay particular attention to the unique circumstances of our history and localities. With regards to the democratic breakthrough, we must acknowledge that we inherited a deeply divided society which was spatially, culturally, socially, environmentally, and economically fragmented.

We therefore instituted a wall-to-wall municipal system to broaden the reach of the state and ensure that all residents experience service delivery and democratic governance at the local sphere. However, in implementing the wall-to-wall system we did not sufficiently interrogate some of the key assumptions, including those of the funding model which assumes that every municipality will be able to raise its own revenue. The reality is the most municipalities do not have a sufficient income and revenue base to drive developments. The majority are impoverished, and most residents are unemployed and reliant on social grants and other low-income livelihood strategies.

Thus, this Summit must pay attention to the funding model, which in our view needs to change and provide greater emphasis on needs, aspirations and local conditions confronting the people. *Tswanetsi iBehe Batho Pele!!!*

Programme Director in charting an implementable, measurable and timebound plan of action, we must also pay attention to the attendant challenges and contexts of local government. This analysis will also assist in understanding the political, governance, financial, administrative challenges which have often led to sub-standard service delivery and developmental outcomes.

We must also learn from the progress we have recorded in certain areas. For instance, 141 municipalities which constitute 54% of all municipalities received unqualified audits, in the past financial year. Certainly the 16% who received a clean audit can facilitate and be supportive to the 42% who either received qualified, adverse, or disclaimed audits.

Special attention must also be given to the 9 municipalities who had outstanding audits. We all have a responsibility to support them. SALGA and those municipalities that are doing better should take leadership in that regard. As said by President Mandela the ultimate measure should be how we transform the material conditions confronting the masses of our people, especially those who live in rural areas, townships, and informal settlements.

In this regard, since our last Summit we have recorded varied and notable progress in delivering quality services:

- 90% of our households access the electricity grid compared to, 86% in 2014 and 70% in 2001, and
- 83% of households access to toilets compared to 79,5% in 2014 and 64% in 2001.

The slower pace of delivery over the past eight years can be accounted for by the ever increasing demand and the spread of services to rural and less dense areas. This in itself challenged the costs per unit and because of limited access and service providers in rural areas, the pace slowed down. Also in this period there was a decline in the households accessing water and refuse removal with;

- 89% of households accessing water, compared to 90% in 2014 and 72% in 2001, and
- 60,5% households accessing weekly refuse removals compared to 63,8% in 2014 and 55% in 2001.

Therefore, we must do more. We must do better in the context of lesser resources, and an ever increasing demand.

Due to our apartheid history and spatial planning, as well as, the characteristics of our economy urban municipalities and metros continue to chase a moving target with services bursting at the seams. 63% of our citizens live in urban South Africa, and if current trends persist this will be 71% by 2030. According to the IHS Markit, cities like Johannesburg and Tshwane have experienced inward migration of 76% and 71%, respectively, since 2001.

However, South Africa's migration situation is quite unique in that most of these urban folk, have dual residencies, with the primary residences being in rural South Africa. This means they temporarily migrate out of the rural areas, out of sheer desperation to swell the ranks of the urban poor, hungry and unemployed. Thus, Districts like Xhariep and Amathole have experienced outward migration of 9,5% and 5,4%, since 2001.

Programme Director, our analysis and reports on local government have proven to be inadequate because we have fallen short of reimagining different futures. We have been limited in our thinking by our current challenges and constraints. Yet the steps to resolving those challenges require of us to free ourselves of these current and urgent limitations and challenges.

We must take a long-term view and implement long range planning. This will permit us to chart a course of action which will allow us to prioritise and sequence our short-term plans and interventions. It will also permit us to ensure that the people's aspirations, hopes, and dreams are at the centre of our plans, strategies, and implementation.

Our plans and strategies must be rooted in our African-ness and must celebrate our heritage and culture including our cultural assets such as cuisine, fashion, dance, and song. We must be able to anchor our plans on who we are and the tried and tested knowledge systems, which have built magnificent wonders such as *Inzalo ye Langa*, in the Gert Sibande District. This is the oldest stone calendar in world. Our sophisticated indigenous scientific knowledge must also find expression in our plans. That astute knowledge is shown in the buildings, art and smelter gold pieces found in places such as the Great Kingdom of Mapungubwe in the Vhembe District.

Allow me to take a page from *the E Mail from the Future* which was addressed to Kwame in documents of *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*; in it we predicted a future where [I quote]

“By the intelligent application of centuries-old indigenous knowledge, acquired and conserved by African women who have tended crops in all seasons, within the first few years bumper harvests were being reported. Agronomists consulted women about the qualities of various grains – which ones survived low rainfalls and which thrived in wet weather; what pests threatened crops and how could they be combated without undermining delicate ecological systems.

The social impact of the agrarian revolution was perhaps the most enduring change it brought about. The status of women, the tillers of the soil by tradition, rose exponentially. The girl child, condemned to a future in the kitchen or the fields in our not too distant past, now has an equal chance of acquiring a modern education (and owning a farm or an agribusiness). African mothers today have access to tractors and irrigation systems that can be easily assembled.”

Programme Director, in addition to our heritage, culture, history, and indigenous knowledge systems our plans, we must take into consideration the beautiful flora and fauna which find expression in the beautiful roses of Manguang and the fynbos of the Karoo as well as the beautiful wildlife and game of places such as the Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati, Fezile Dabi and Waterberg Districts. We also have some of the most exotic and unique bird species with our national bird, the Blue Crane, occupying a very prominent position. As we draw our plans and strategies we must also take into cognisance our breath-taking landscape which flows from the heights of the Majestic uKhahlamba to the river mouths that pour into the Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

Areas that previously knew no or little development, must be prioritised. Thus, we need more Eastern Seaboard type development projects. These types of development projects will ensure that people migrate from rural areas out of choice. It will also ensure that those in current cities and urban towns choose to move back to the rural areas. Already other areas including Mopani, Sekhukhune and Dr Kenneth Kaunda Districts have expressed an interest in following the same path as the recently Gazetted Eastern Seaboard Region.

The region brings together the Districts of Alfred Nzo, OR Tambo, Harry Gwala and Ugu in the provinces of Eastern Cape and KZN. In the Eastern Seaboard development, we have confirmed the requirement for the need for detailed collaboration and planning with other neighbouring regions such as those of eThekweni, iLembe, Amathole and Chris Hani.

Creating these economic and social linkages and complementarities in all our local economies is important in recording the required economic growth and in realising the goals of the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030.

Programme Director, the realisation of the goals of the NDP must be anchored on realising the objective of an ideal local government. An ideal local government is one in which people live a decent life where the air is clean and human settlements are resilient and can withstand disasters and calamities. To sustain this beyond the clean water, dignified sanitation, and appropriate greener construction, building and maintenance practices, we must do more to protect our world. The African Union has the Great Green Wall project, which seeks to reverse desertification and provide cleaner air, by planting trees in the desert areas as part of *Agenda 2063, the Africa We Want*. We believe that we can complement those efforts by introducing a project to plant a million fruit trees over the next five years.

We believe that this will also contribute to food security, as most of these trees will be in the yards and households of our citizens. Thus, for us an ideal local government implies one in which no child or family goes to bed without adequate nutritious food. Thus, basics such as vegetables, fruits, eggs, and meat should ideally be sourced locally, especially in rural areas. One should not have to contend and compete with bread trucks from afar on our roads, because we can in fact build and support local bakeries and cooperatives. We must therefore capitalise on the fertility of our land. We must place the maize fields at Thabo Mafutsanyane and the milk cows of Harry Gwala to work.

To do so we shall have to ensure that the land is redistributed and provided to the people, and that they receive financial, material and skilling support so that the land can become productive.

To support our agriculture and agro-processing sector we must resuscitate the manufacturing sector, which was once the bedrock of local economies in places like Amajuba, Sedibeng, Buffalo City and Nelson Mandela Bay. We should extend to new frontiers such as ICT and electronics, whilst capitalising on existing Special Economic Zones (SEZs), such as those that have been established in Tshwane, Bojanala, King Cetshwayo, Thabo Mafutsanyana and the Wild Coast. As we recently heard in the Presidential Imbizo, in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District we must extend to new sites and repurpose existing infrastructure such as unused airports and government buildings.

These and other priorities will require that the ideal local government has its own municipal, cooperative and community banks. This would support local aspirations and ensure that income circulates within the community or locality at least once. This will require a radical transformation of our financial services sector which is essentially geared to supporting a privileged few to the exclusion of women, Africans, and young people.

This is partially what we mean when we say an ideal local government is economically inclusive and liveable. People should want to live, visit, come back, and feel welcome as law abiding citizens in an ideal local government.

People must be free to participate in the vibrant, inclusive, and resilient economy, with no hindrances. An ideal local government creates quality jobs and promotes sustainable livelihoods, which are driven by investments as well as the people, community organisations, cooperatives, and local businesses.

To enable trade, investment, and access to markets the ideal local government is inter-connected within itself and with other communities here and in the world. Thus, its transport infrastructure is affordable, integrated and environmentally friendly. Which network and social outcomes, such as health, education, and recreation should be supported by an affordable, fast, reliable, and accessible ICT network.

The ideal local government places a premium on creative and innovative excellence. All cultures, religions, and creeds are embraced, just as the colours of our national flag are diverse. Therefore, the doors of learning, culture, recreation, and healing in an ideal local government are fully swung open. The residents and visitors have easy access, and the women and children feel safe as the wheels of security and justice are there to protect them. This is also a drug free environment where there is no human trafficking as well as Gender Based Violence and Femicide. Such acts are frowned on by men and women alike and the men are active partners in combatting these acts of criminality.

The ideal local government requires skilled residents. A skills revolution is therefore critical to realising the objectives of an ideal local government. That skills revolution must pay particular attention to the skills required to support the economic growth areas, as shown in countries such as South Korea and Germany where the artisanry skills receive added attention, beyond the academic priority areas.

For instance, South Africa has a coastline that is over 3 000 km of coastline which stretches from Namakwa to Cape Town in the West and from Nelson Mandela Bay to Zululand in the East. Not only can this be a source of food, but it can support our manufacturing, recreation, arts, and tourism sectors. To unlock this sector we will require oceanographers, maritime lawyers, naval architects, coastal engineers, tour operators, chefs, and sommeliers, amongst others. In the Oceans Economy the possibilities are boundless and can be complemented by inland fisheries and water recreation as is the case in places such as Ehlanzeni District and uMgungundlovu Districts. The projections back this proposal as in 2010, fisheries and aquaculture contributed R7-billion to GDP and employed 30 000 people. By 2033, the contribution could increase to R16-billion and employ 200 000 people.

All these require a reliable and consistent energy and electricity supply. The current blackouts serve to threaten our hopes and aspirations. We must position our municipalities as energy generators and distributors. This requires that we implement an appropriate energy mix, which continues the sustainable use coal and fossils, whilst complementing them with the utilisation of renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and biomass.

Certainly, we have seen this work on a small scale in some municipalities such as Pixley Ka Seme, Sarah Baartman, Harry Gwala and West Rand.

Programme Director, the ideal country is therefore a function of an ideal local government. These require capable, ethical, principled, and capacitated leaders everywhere but particularly in the council and administration of the municipality.

Elsewhere in the world the best are deployed and employed in local governments. Take for instance the current President of Turkey who was the Prime Minister between 2003 and 2014, emerged straight from the mayoral seat of Istanbul, the cultural and commercial capital of Turkey. Jacques Chirac who was Mayor of Paris and Francois Holland who was mayor of Tulle, both became Presidents in France. In China in the last few decades city's such as Shanghai have produced many of the country's senior leaders including Jiang Zemin who was SG of Party and President of PRC between 1993 and 2003. The current President Xi Jinping also held senior positions in the city.

Therefore, local leaders must have the astuteness to understand their roles and functions, without scope creep and undue external influences. Municipal leadership in an ideal municipality promote a culture of ethical business practices. In an ideal municipality there is a culture of accountability and political will to realise change to create a conducive environment for effective oversight. There is zero tolerance for poor performance and transgressions. All the oversight structures, including the Municipal Public Accounts Committees and the Troika's are fully functional and coherent.

Thus, decisions are participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective, efficient, equitable, inclusive and follow the rule of law. In an ideal municipality consultations and active inclusion of the communities and their structures including Ward Committees, Cooperatives as well as women's and youth groups and people with disabilities are a norm. The ideal municipality also maintains dynamic communications with the community and its members, as well as interested and critical stakeholders. Where traditional councils or institutions of traditional leadership exist, they are an integral part of the planning, implementation, and oversight roles of the ideal municipality. In an ideal municipality the evaluation of oversight structures and performance goes beyond the number of meetings convened, but it measures and responds to public confidence and the quality-of-service delivery.

The ideal municipality hires the best suited, qualified, and experienced for the available jobs, without regards to political affiliation, religion, gender, race, class, or sexual orientation. To support this the ideal municipality has the appropriate and transparent policies and practices. Which are complemented by open communication, systems which provide feedback and necessary support and mentoring structures for staff.

The ideal municipality plans and implements with the people, and most of its decisions are evidence based, thus service delivery is agile and responsive to the needs and aspirations of the communities and society. Thus, it too reflects society in age groups, race, gender, class, ethnicities, religions, and backgrounds. In an ideal municipality discrimination and Gender Based Violence and Femicide are frowned upon and dealt in the harshest of terms.

An ideal municipality also employs gender-based budgeting so that it can track its impact on gender transformation in its immediate and related communities. To ensure impactful and continuous impact, the ideal municipality employs a Zero-Based Budget system, which is complemented by transparent procurement processes which favour local talent as well as qualifying, experienced, and capable businesses and cooperatives.

An ideal municipality is innovative in raising revenue and investments as it is a driver for local economic development. Thus, service delivery is facilitated for without compromising efficient and effective utilisation of the resources entrusted to it by the public. Thus, the infrastructure is built and maintained within the prescribed norms, standards, and costs, as far as possible. There are minimal unfunded and underfunded mandates and there are no unfunded budgets. This is because the District Development Model is in full action, therefore all programmes and projects are supported by the other spheres as well as investors and stakeholders.

The ideal municipality has a thorough Disaster Management Plan, which is integrated within its One Plan, which has been informed by the Integrated Development Plan, and has been developed with the community. The Plan is responsive to man-made, natural, and climate-related disasters and calamities, which is supported by an early warning system that is inclusive of communities. The plan is implemented together with other spheres of government as well as regional and international partners.

Programme Director, for the ideal local government and municipality to have greater impact it must positively impact on and take advantage of the opportunities offered by continental programmes such as *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want* and the Africa Continental Free Trade Area. It will be impossible for our national and local economies to thrive unless they are integrated with those in the continent. It will be impossible for our economies to be islands of prosperity in a sea of hunger, want and poverty. By lifting our economies together with our neighbouring and far off states, we can address the challenges related to migration.

An ideal local government and municipality also leverages on the experiences of our friends in the world, particularly those who confront similar situations in the developing world. Thus, we must build international solidarity and utilise the hundreds of partnerships and twinning agreements we have entered. These can be the source of addressing our own shortcomings whilst opening new and sustainable markets.

Programme Director, with the pillars of what an IDEAL local government and municipality should be, I believe the scene has been set for the remainder of the 2 days – I wish you successful discussions and deliberations, and trust that the work in the commissions will result in resolutions, a road map, and actions. These require that we work together in realise an IDEAL municipality, in the service of the people and communities that are democratic, resilient, prosperous, cohesive, connected, non-sexist, non-racist, and climate smart.

I Thank you