

**Media Release**  
**For immediate release**

**6 August 2018**

**SALGA Mpumalanga Provincial Members' Assembly 2018 hosted successfully**

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 2018, SALGA in Mpumalanga hosted its Provincial Members' Assembly at Premier Hotel Winkler, in order to:

- Adopt the provincial members' programme of action, business plan and budget in respect of the ensuing year;
- Consider reports from the working groups and oversight bodies; and
- Deal with any other issues emanating from the provisions applicable to provincial members in this Constitution.

The SALGA Constitution (as amended) provides that "SALGA shall atleast annually, save for the year in which the National/Provincial Conference is due, hold a meeting of members to be known and described in the notice calling such a meeting as the National/ Provincial Members' Assembly. The Members' Assembly is charged with the responsibility of exercising SALGA's authority between Conferences which take place every five (5) years.

The Chairperson of SALGA Mpumalanga Clr. Muzi Chirwa gave the official opening remarks on day one of the programme, mentioning that *"The local government sphere continues to play a significant role in terms of delivering services to communities. As the closest sphere and the coal face of service delivery, the work that local government undertakes directly affects the communities that we serve. It remains our collective desire and hope that all our 20 municipalities in the province receive a clean audit. A Clean Audit whose impact can be equated to tangible service delivery programmes. SALGA as a member centric organisation that looks to advance the interests of you our members, we take*

*cognisance of the challenges faced by municipalities. In line with our mandate we will look to unlock some of the bottlenecks that the sector continues to face”.*

In his Keynote address, the MEC for the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) Mr. Speedy Mashilo said that *“We remember the teachings of Tata Mandela and him addressing the founding conference of SALGA in December 1996. Our communities expect a better life as we have promised them. The baton must continue moving forward in ensuring that municipalities are functional. We must be distinct as we conclude the PMA as to how we address the service delivery protests as municipalities. We as municipalities need to lead together with our communities”.*

Three (3) Panel Discussion were held during the event, focusing on the following topics:

- Improving water resources quality: Issues of efficient management of waste water treatment works
- Non-payment/late payment of submitted invoices for municipal rates and services by government departments
- Surcharge or levy on electricity sales by Eskom on areas not supplied by the municipality but within its municipal boundaries
- Fulfilling socio-economic rights at the local government level
- Improving capacity building (skills) at local government level
- The impact of political, economic, socio-cultural, environmental and other external influences on rendering effective Municipal Health Services (MHS)
- Strengthening accountability to improve outcomes
- Integrated approach to municipal revenue management
- Improving the working conditions of Environmental Health Practitioners at the district municipalities
- Nkomazi SEZ progress report on the application for design

**The Provincial Members Assembly resolved on the following matters:**

- 1) SALGA should conduct a research on possible funding model for councilors remuneration.
- 2) Both Councilors and Officials should not be in arrears in terms of their rates and services.
- 3) Municipalities should conduct awareness programmes in communities to deal with the culture

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of Non-payment of rates and services to increase revenue collection.

- 4) Municipalities should provide SALGA with the relevant accurate information in relation to outstanding debts by government departments.
- 5) In a case where a municipality opt to have the Electricity reticulation function done by ESKOM, there should be a service level agreement between the two parties.
- 6) SALGA to come up with a position paper on the issue of fuel levy and municipalities to be consulted to make inputs in the position paper.
- 7) Municipalities to implement on the recommendations from the Auditor General, SALGA, COGTA and Treasury for improved audit outcomes.
- 8) Municipalities should also report on the resolutions taken in the Governance Structures of SALGA.
- 9) The Local Economic Development units in municipalities to work closely with Mpumalanga Economic Growth Agency (MEGA) to revive the SEZ in the other districts.
- 10) Municipalities especially Council Speakers to work closely with SALGA in the enrolment of Councillors for the 2nd phase of the ICIP.
- 11) SALGA should arrange a session on the Grading of municipalities in relation to the Wage Curve.
- 12) Municipalities to quantify the debt in their books and how far they have dealt with the issue of right offs.
- 13) SALGA to Conduct a research as to which municipalities are not paying for services, and in terms of the indigents how many are registered as indigents in municipalities and the equitable share they receive is it equal to the number of indigents.
- 14) SALGA, the Department of Co-operative Government and Traditional Affairs, the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Affairs to work together in assessing which farms have a problem in terms of service provision.
- 15) SALGA to conduct a research on the establishment of an agency to collect revenue at district level.
- 16) Municipalities to ring fence the funds allocated to the Municipal Health Service function.
- 17) Municipalities to appoint municipal health staff in line with the World Health Organization standards.

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- 18) SALGA to conduct training of the Councilors and officials on the Municipal Health Service function.
- 19) Municipalities to prioritize the appointment of Environmental Health Practitioners.
- 20) SARS in partnership with SALGA to conduct education sessions for accounting officers for administration purposes.
- 21) SARS be encouraged to use the SALGA website and other communication channels to inform communities about the SARS Education and Mobile Tax Units (MTU) interventions.
- 22) Municipalities to partner with SARS to support small businesses on tax compliance issues.

**The members noted the following:**

- 1) The progress made by the Inter Ministerial Task Team of which is part of, in terms of the ESKOM issue.
- 2) The MOU between Eskom and SALGA to capacitate Municipalities on the following:
  - Cost Reflective Tariffs (Eskom Tariffs are seasonal)
  - Revenue Management
  - Capacity Building (Training)
- 3) That most municipalities signed the ESKOM payment plans which are not sustainable in order to be able to access the equitable share.
- 4) The realistic assessment that has been done in terms of ESKOM outstanding accounts which resulted in new payment plans that have been signed by some municipalities.
- 5) The need to come up with strategies to address the escalating ESKOM debt that was created by the interest charged within 15 days as now interest is charged at 30 days.
- 6) The late signing of contracts in terms of the Integrated National Electrification Programme.
- 7) The progress made to date on the legislative and policy review on councillor support, welfare and remuneration which affects councillors' capacity to fulfil their obligations.
- 8) The progress made in the process to amend the legislation to include the roles and responsibilities of Whips of Councils.

- 9) That the budgets of most municipalities are not cash backed/funded and the need for SALGA and Treasury to support municipalities to balance their budgets.
- 10) The need for municipalities to share best practices amongst themselves on issues of audits and the AG be engaged to do pre-audits for municipalities.
- 11)The improved 2016/17 audit outcomes in the municipalities.
- 12) The SEZ programme that is rolled out in Nkomazi Local Municipality and its envisaged benefits to the community of Nkomazi.
- 13)The SALGA Capacity building programmes especially the Credit bearing LG Women in Leadership Development Programme that will be launched soon.
- 14)17. The Municipal debts In terms of water and electricity and the debts owed to municipalities by Government departments as well as the work that SALGA will be undertaking in coming up with strategies to deal with bad debts.
- 15)The need for COGTA to emphasize the importance of Sector Departments to participate in the IDP processes of municipalities.
- 16)That the municipal health services is not clearly incorporated to the entire health system and not understood by some municipalities.
- 17)Lack of standardized allocation of the equitable share to the MHS in the three District
- 18) Limited budget and lack of prioritisation of the MHS function as a core function of the District Municipality which they need to account for to the National Department of Health.
- 19)The work that is done by SALGA for far in terms of advocating for the Role of Municipal Health Services on National Health Insurance implementation.
- 20)Capacity in Municipalities to deal with compliance issues (Staff Turnover and skills transfer)
- 21)Lack of attendance of training interventions/ sessions offered by SARS (especially non-compliant municipalities).

The first day (2 August 2018) was concluded with a Gala Dinner in the evening whereby SALGA recognized municipalities for their hard work and dedication in supporting SALGA and providing services to communities. Municipalities were awarded as follows:

- 1) **Nkangala District Municipality and Bushbuckridge Local Municipality:** in recognition of attendance on SALGA programmes;
- 2) **Nkangala District Municipality and Ehlanzeni District Municipality:** in recognition of Clean Audit Outcomes for 2016/17;
- 3) **Gert Sibande District Municipality, Chief Albert Luthuli and Thembisile Hani Local Municipality:** in recognition of improved audit outcomes for 2016/17;
- 4) **Steve Tshwete Local Municipality and Nkangala District Municipality:** in recognition of full payment of membership levies on time;
- 5) **Gert Sibande District Municipality:** in recognition of Disability Mainstreaming on District Municipal Programmes;
- 6) **Nkangala District Municipality:** in recognition of Community Safety
- 7) **City of Mbombela Local Municipality:** in recognition of Economic Growth and Developments;
- 8) **Ehlanzeni District Municipality:** in recognition of Functional District Municipal Accounts Committee (MPAC);
- 9) **Thembisile Hani Local Municipality:** in recognition of Functional Local Municipal Accounts Committee (MPAC);
- 10) **Ehlanzeni District Municipality:** in recognition for Best Performing District Job Evaluation unit;
- 11) **Nkomazi Local Municipality:** in recognition for Best Performing Local Job Evaluation unit;
- 12) **Ehlanzeni District Municipality:** in recognition for Implementation of Performance Management System;
- 13) **Gert Sibande District Municipality and City of Mbombela Local Municipality:** in recognition of Municipal Initiatives on Environmental Management;
- 14) **Ehlanzeni District Municipality:** in recognition of Municipal Initiatives on District Energy Forums;
- 15) **Nkangala District Municipality:** in recognition of the Chairperson's Award.

The members appreciated the relations between SALGA, Provincial Government, Mpumalanga House of Traditional Leaders, Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature and its strategic partners in continuously providing the necessary support and assistance to member municipalities.

The members noted the 100% achievement made by SALGA Mpumalanga for the 2017/18 financial year the 100% overall achievement and the Clean Audit received by SALGA, as well as the need for municipalities to improve on the oversight role of councilors on financial management and compliance.

**ENDS**

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