

Welcome Address by the Executive Mayor during District Consultative Work on Policy Review Process, Welkom on the 18th October 2007

Programme Director
MEC for Local Government & Housing
Mayors
Speakers
Councillors
SALGA FS
Officials of the Department
Municipal Managers
Business Organisations
NGO's & CBO's
Faith Based Organisations
Ladies and Gentlemen

I wish to welcome everyone who graced this important occasion on behalf of the district. This process must reflect the full participation of the stakeholders and our communities at large. This is necessary not because we are avoiding litigations and protests when other important stakeholders are left out but our community involvement in all issues of governance is crucial. Our participatory democracy should not be seen only in paper but should be realized by our actions.

Policies of government are not cast and stone but provides for review process with time hence this exercise today. The Department of Provincial and Local Government has been tasked to facilitate this process. Public comments and inputs are invited to strengthen our system of governance.

Some milestones have been achieved since the launch of the White Paper, however this review process is important to translate challenges facing local government into achievable goals and/or vision. This process is aimed at identifying gaps in these policies and finds a way of closing those gaps.

The two processes, i.e. *revision of the White Paper on Local Government and formulation of the White Paper on Provincial Government* are running parallel and we need to take this exercise serious because they both affect our provincial and local governance.

In our strategic planning session that took place on the 16-17 October 2007, we noted the importance of IGR but also realized the challenges and gaps in the approach. The session then responded to those challenges by proposing a number of issues that we will be adding on our submission as a district. We hope that they will be strengthening this document, *White Paper on Local Government*, in ensuring effective intergovernmental relations amongst others.