

Welcome Address by the Acting Executive Mayor in the Official Launch of Intergovernmental Relations Forum at Lejweleputswa District Municipality Cllr. Archie Mbanja

I am happy to have the Minister in the Office of the Presidency to bless this gathering. This meeting will now be able to concretize issues around how best can we implement the **Inter-Governmental Relations Framework Act** to improve service delivery in our district.

Today we are aiming at formalising the service delivery cooperation between national, provincial and local government. This formal launch is critical because co-operation between the three spheres of government has largely been informal.

The Act comes not just from the constitutional requirement that a law be passed to regulate intergovernmental co-operation, but also reflects an acknowledgement that poverty and underdevelopment are challenges best addressed by all spheres of government working together.

At the heart of the transformation agenda lies the question: how best can we achieve key public objectives in a context where public authority is distributed amongst the various spheres of government?

It is clear that more effective co-operation could decrease the cost of 'doing governance', allowing more time and resources to be dedicated to actual service delivery. It is through these kind of fora that we will see our work as government simpler. The Act which regulates this cooperation has two key features:

Substantively, it creates a number of institutions designed to facilitate coordination; And **procedurally**, it establishes a standard of conduct and a protocol for implementation.

The Act establishes a number of intergovernmental consultative forums and structures. At some of these forums, for example, the President, or the responsible Cabinet member, may raise matters of national interest with provincial and organized local government; consult with them on the implementation of national policy and legislation; and discuss their performance in the provision of services with the aim of detecting failures and initiating corrective action. The presence of the Minister in this launch is reflective of these principles and will learn from one another's experiences.

Much is to be gained from a novel piece of legislation on co-operative government with a balanced vision of government in line with the Constitution.

In the current informal co-operative framework, there is a lack of clarity about the inclusion of local government—with the Bill, it is clear that local government is part of the co-operative framework in line with the constitution.

Government must ensure that its provisions and functions are implemented effectively. This will depend largely on national government, provinces and municipalities sharing

information, developmental agendas and concerns in such a manner that better implementation of laws, policies and efficient service delivery follow. A thorough implementation support program must exist.

Without the continuing engagement of all stakeholders, we run the risk of not addressing the problem the Act is designed to solve.

I therefore call on all of us to start sharing programmes and ideas to better the lives of our people.