



Lecture by the Sedibeng District Municipality Executive Mayor, Cllr. Mahole Simon Mofokeng on the occasion of the Government Planning, Policy Development & Implementation Conference 2010 at the Harvard Training Institute on the 04th May 2010

Programme Director;

Ladies & Gentlemen

I bring you greeting from the Sedibeng District Municipality. I am charged with the responsibility to present a lecture on: The efficiency of Intergovernmental relations. While it may be convenient to digress and break down the meaning of words such as efficiency and the framework of IGR, my intention through this presentation will in the main address itself to areas where the said efficiency or lack thereof if any, manifests itself.

I will in my presentation, paint in broad strokes, the national and the provincial picture of IGR at work, whilst at the same time, present real evidence of IGR effects on Sedibeng District Municipality.

Rationale

First and foremost, if IGR as a framework for operations in a multi-tiered system of South African government did not work, we would be seeing a total collapse of the government as we know it. Services would not be delivered, houses would not have been built, roads would not have been built and communities would be in total disarray and chaos would be the order of the day.

It is as we fail to find the total collapse and chaos alluded to above, that we seek to look out for what makes the communities of South Africa to progress in the manner which they have been. What makes it possible for water to be delivered to households daily, what makes it possible for refuse to be removed regularly, what makes it possible for electricity to be provided to communities on the fringes of beyond.

Our premise must therefore reflect the startling reality which is a reflection of the South African nation. It is with this in mind that we are able to see in its proper perspective the work which has been done and continues to be done by the three spheres of government beyond the smoke screen of the so-called “Service Delivery protests”

It is as we look at the deliberate, well thought out and progressive development of entire communities in the country, armed with wisdom of hindsight, informed by real evidence of tangible examples that one is able to say to himself “Something must be working efficiently here, but what is it? The answer to this question is simple: The efficiency of IGR.

Overview

The need for co-operation in a District Municipality such as our own in Sedibeng, may also impact on the objectives and targets as set out by the National Parliament as espoused in various policies. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa in Section 41, Subsection 1(h) a chapter which deals with Principles of co-operative government and intergovernmental Relations is clear.

This section reads thus, “All spheres of government and all organs of state within each sphere must: Co-operate with one another in mutual trust and good faith by-

- Fostering friendly relations;
- Assisting and supporting one another
- Informing one another of, and consulting one another on, matters of common interest;

- Co-coordinating their actions and legislation with one another;
- Adhering to agreed procedures; and
- Avoiding legal proceedings against one another.

With this framework as set out above, it is expected therefore that all spheres of government must be seen to operate in tandem, cooperate and avoid conflict. To ensure that the entire South African citizens become beneficiaries of government programs, the national government and the provincial governments must be seen to be singing from the same hymn book and the same verse.

The national government will from time to time set up objectives as well as targets, the provincial parliament will then be expected to translate these objectives and targets into tangible provincial projects taking into consideration the demographics of each municipality in the particular province in line with the budget available.

At this stage, it is expected that each municipality will then develop plans and programmes to ensure that these national objectives and targets find expression in the five year Integrated Development Plans which will be broken down into SDBIP's annually.

This will ensure that communities and ordinary citizens are able to get value as envisaged by the National parliament.

It is therefore no coincidence that each and every year, the State President, Honourable Jacob Zuma will make pronouncements in his State of the Nation Address, to set out government objectives and priorities for that particular year. It is only after these objectives and targets being set that we see the presentations by each Premier in the State of the Province Address, to lay down the provincial interpretations and targets to meet the objectives as set out by the President.

It is after the Premier has presented the State of the Province Address that we see the various Municipalities, after extensive Public Participation processes that we see the conclusion of the IDP and its presentation to the communities. The IDP is at this stage an expression of community needs as aligned with the government objectives.

The overview, presented here in this manner, paints a picture of seamless synergy, which would work perfectly every time. The execution of the targets and objectives as set out is an entirely new kettle of fish. How then do ensure that there is no disparity in carrying out these objectives?

The section which follows soon hereafter seeks to present a practical application of IGR. This will give evidence of whether there is efficiency in the application of IGR or not. The evidence as provided will then allow you as esteemed scholars do carry out your necessary enquiries to arrive at a determination as to the efficiency or otherwise of IGR.

Structures of IGR

Faced with the challenges to ensure the seamless application and execution of the objectives and targets set from time to time, the following IGR structures were deemed to be necessary:

- Joint Mayors Forum
- Joint Mayoral Committee Forum
- Joint Mayoral Lekgotla
- Joint Municipal Managers Forum
- Chief Financial Officers Forum
- Cluster IGR Forum
- Vaal 21 Technical and Political For a
- NDPG Technical Committee Forum

Evidence of IGR at work

We in Sedibeng are blessed with the following characteristics which make us unique in the entire country:

- An un-spoilt, pristine and largest inland body of water which lends itself to multi-discipline, water-based and multi-purpose investment and development purposes. In the form of the Vaal Dam and the only navigable part of the Vaal River.
- A well developed infrastructure within District with the availability of large tracts of land which is available for industrial, commercial, human settlement and recreational development. You name it, we have it. The scope for investment and growth is massive to say the least.
- A very rich history and heritage which other areas in the entire country can only envy.
- Geographically, we remain the gateway of Gauteng Province to the Free State, on the border of both the North West Province and Mpumalanga, with well developed road infrastructure to link up all these provinces with the coastal provinces such as KwaZulu-Natal, the Western Cape and the Northern Cape. No other single District Municipality in the entire country boasts these unique distinctions.

- We are blessed with vast tracts of land which lends themselves to industrial, residential as well as hospitality developments.

All of the above opportunities stood untapped and just that, opportunities as a result of the inability to deal with the effluence which would flow into the streets and the river during and after heavy rains. This was due to the fact that we in Sedibeng provided a platform for the provision of low cost housing in the region greater or more than any other region, district or municipality in the whole country since the advent of democracy.

The attendant growth of Sedibeng Communities was not in line with the investment in water reticulation infrastructure. As if this was not enough, the planning of this infrastructure was much that, some of the effluence which had to be processed in the Region, was coming from the neighboring Johannesburg Metropolitan Council.

It is with protracted engagements at the various IGR structures, notably within the Premier's Coordinating Forum and bilateral engagements with the Johannesburg Metro, which was sympathetic that we are able to present a success story today.

The National Treasury, convinced of the need to unlock the opportunities alluded to, came to the party by providing funding which will set into motion the construction of a multi-billion Sewer Treatment Plant which will create thousands of jobs during and after construction. It is in the execution of this project that the necessary jobs as envisaged in the State of the Nation Address will find expression.

The creation of these necessary jobs, while being an offshoot of the construction of the envisaged sewer treatment works, falls right within the government objectives to create sustainable jobs to enhance the economic well being of the entire District in particular and the province in general. If IGR was seen to be at work, this project, made possible by effective IGR structures, is proof of the efficiency of IGR.

Provision of Housing

As a point of departure, allow me to inform that we in Sedibeng District Municipality together with the Provincial Department of housing, have built more than 10 000 low cost housing between the year 2007 and now. This we did in spite of the world wide recession which impacted negatively on the provision of other essential services.

While it is the competency of province to see that these units are built, the success of this will depend on the facilitation role of the Local Municipalities. The role that is then expected from the Local Municipalities is to do the following:

- Conduct a land audit
- Audit and register informal settlements
- Assist in the development of a database of those in need of housing
- Provide and unlock the land within its area of jurisdiction
- Develop plans for the installation of infrastructure
- Source for funding and install the necessary infrastructure

It is looking at the above, that it is expected therefore that the housing policy of the government will find expression in both the IDP and the SDBIP of the Local Municipality.

As a result of intergovernmental interactions and engagement, the debilitating effect of the recession had minimal effect of the delivery of houses to our communities. The provision of housing on this scale, led to the creation of much needed jobs in the region.

With the amount of land available, the expansion of the Regional Sewer Works alluded to above, we are still to see widespread developments for human settlements in the region.

Giving expression to our Heritage

Sedibeng District has a rich history and heritage. This history stretches to the time of the Anglo-Boer Wars and the subsequent Covenant which was signed on the bank of the Vaal River, a stone's throw from the Civic Centre.

The area's history is further enhanced by the Sharpeville Massacre, the Azikhwelwa Bus Boycotts in Evaton, the Rent Boycott of 1984, the Delmas Treason Trial, The Sharpeville Six, the Eikenhof Three trials and the signing of the Constitution on the hallowed grounds of the George Thabe Stadium.

With all these great historical transactions happening in our Region, it was only fair that proper recognition and preservation of this heritage was put into place. It was through the proper planning by the District, working in tandem with the provincial department that we today boast of a funded Constitution Walk, a revival of the old Sharpeville Hall, which will be restored to its former glory, having been declared a Heritage Site.

As if this is not enough, the Sharpeville Police Station, from which the first salvo of shots which led to the Sharpeville Massacre has been transformed into a Craft Hub, a center for reconciliation.

Vaal 21 River City Programme

Due to our proximity to the main waterway in Gauteng, which is shared with the Fezile Dhaba District Municipality in the Northern Free State, the shared vision to develop the river front area is captured through the Vaal 21 initiative. The essence of this initiative is aimed at the following:

- Enable development such as the new regional sewer works(alluded to above), an air quality management plan and enabling upstream and downstream manufacturing in the mineral and energy sector
- Accelerate growth such as the new Heineken Brewery, upgrading the R57 and upgrading the airfields in Parys and Kroonstad.
- Promote urban renewal such as the Sharpeville heritage, sports and recreation precincts, Evaton Renewal and beautification of various townships as well as the CBD Renewal
- Promote tourism and Leisure such as the development of an urban Waterfront (Vereeniging and Sasolburg), Vaal Dam and Vredefort Dome development.

Faced with this mammoth task, good IGR came into play. This has seen linkages being forged with the Free State Provincial Government as well as the Fezile Dhaba District Municipality. As we speak, high level engagements for the Vaal 21 Initiative have been concluded.

Some of the flagship projects of the Vaal 21 Initiative are already at the execution phase, just about to be completed, whilst others are at the planning phase and the rest are being proposed as we go along.

These projects are spread between the local government and others are to be tackled in partnership between various spheres of government as well as the private sector. The success of these projects serves as a clear indicator of IGR at work. I have no doubt in my mind that these projects will show the best practice model of an efficient IGR at work.

Conclusion

The efficiency of IGR is premised on very firm foundations as seen in the evidence provided and these foundations are:

- Setting of objectives

It is as soon as the national government sets the tone, setting out objectives for a particular period of time, that we see the ball getting into motion.

- **Funding and Budget**

As a result of the objectives being set, the budget being allocated for the said objectives, from the national government, the provincial government then translates these into tangible projects to be cascaded to Municipalities.

- **Prioritizing**

The various Municipalities then translate the provincial projects into priority areas which will then find expression in the IDP and the SDBIP. It is in the execution of these projects at the Local Government level that we see evidence of government policy finding expression in the lives of all the citizens of this country.

- **Service Delivery**

The realization of the national priorities at the local government level such as the provision of housing, improvement of the infrastructure, provision of clean water,

electricity as well as the removal of refuse all together constitutes service delivery. This is only possible through an efficient execution of the IGR.

The benefits which accrue to the citizens of this country, the ease with which we travel from one area to another, the building of schools and the creation of jobs in Sedibeng and everywhere throughout the province and the country is proof enough of an efficient IGR.

I Thank You.