

**OPENING REMARKS BY HON PREMIER MANDLA NDLOVU FOR THE  
PREMIER'S COORDINATING FORUM(PCF) HELD AT NKANGALA  
DISTRICT COUNCIL ON THE 13<sup>TH</sup> OF AUGUST 2025**

Hon Members of the Provincial Executive Council

Executive Mayors

Deputy Minister of Police, Cassel Mathale: National DDM  
Champion

Deputy Minister of Basic Education, Reginah Mhaule

Traditional Leaders led by Chairperson of the Provincial House  
of Traditional and Khoisan, and President of CONTRALESA,  
Kgosi Mokoena

DG Maggie Skosana

All HODs

All Municipal Managers

Invited Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

1. Let me first take this opportunity and welcome all members of the Premier's Coordinating Council (PCF) and all officials present today in this important meeting.
2. We are meeting today during Women's month after we hosted the successful celebration of the historic 09<sup>th</sup> of August. We are always reminded about the contribution of

women in shaping and taking forward the struggle of the freedom we are enjoying today.

3. We reaffirm that our struggle is not only a struggle for gender equality but also a struggle to eradicate patriarchy as a system and root out discrimination based on sex, as well as eliminating gender –based violence and femicide. We further need to ensure economic freedom for Women of South Africa hence our theme for 2025 being “Building Resilient Economies for All”.
4. As we continue with the celebration of this important women’s month we are also looking forward to the reflection, celebration of legacy and impact of Gogo Esther Mahlangu Art work. The celebration is very historic as our recipient of **Order of Ikhamanga** will be done in some few two months before she turn 90 years old. The Order of Ikhamanga is awarded to citizens who excelled in the fields of arts, culture, literature, music, journalism, or sport. Let us make sure that the celebration will be a lesson and inspiration to current and future generations.
5. As Mpumalanga we are more determined to contribute in making sure that the emancipation of women will never be a slogan but a clear program of this 7<sup>th</sup> administration. Let

us all put our hands on the deck to fight all the wrongs still undermining our efforts.

6. We are aware that the technical committee met on Monday to iron out some technical issues as it is the norm. We have had a successful PCF the last time we met because of the effectiveness of the technical committee under the stewardship of DG Ms Skosana.
7. Today, we gather to address some pressing challenges that our local government and provincial departments in Mpumalanga Province, South Africa, are currently facing.
8. These challenges have the potential of sidetracking us from achieving our priorities, which are: inclusive economic transformation and job creation, education and skills development, poverty reduction, and building a capable, ethical, and developmental state.
9. It is essential to understand that our progress hinges on how effectively we confront these challenges, particularly in the realms of DDM assessment plans, outstanding debts

owed to municipalities, our relationship with the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA), and the vital support received from the Eskom relief fund. Additionally, we must consider our unified efforts in implementing remedial actions concerning unfunded budgets and the audit action plans that guide our fiscal responsibilities.

## **The DDM Assessment Plans**

10. At the heart of our efforts to enhance service delivery lies the District Development Model (DDM) assessment plans. This strategic idea aims to bring about a change in how our local governments function by fostering collaboration and integrating planning at the district level.
11. However, it is imperative to acknowledge that the implementation of the DDM remains uneven across various municipalities. Inadequate resources, lack of skills, and insufficient engagement with communities have hampered progress.
12. We must recognise that effective planning and execution require a concerted effort from all stakeholders. It is essential that we empower our local Councillors

through capacity-building initiatives and enhanced training programs focused on DDM principles.

13. Moreover, we must ensure community participation in the assessment process to foster local ownership of programs and initiatives. We need private sector involvement for us to realize successful implementation of anchor projects highlighted on the DDM plans. By removing the barriers to implementing DDM assessment plans, we can achieve more effective and integrated service delivery that meets the needs of our citizens.

### **Outstanding Debts to Municipalities and AGSA**

14. The financial health of our municipalities is a matter of grave concern. Reports indicate that numerous municipalities continue to grapple with substantial debts owed to them by various entities.
15. This situation not only strains the fiscal capacity of these municipalities but also hampers their ability to deliver essential services to their residents. I am pleased by the effort from Provincial Government to pay these outstanding

debts to Municipalities, indeed the progress is recognized and we should appreciate the effort made in this regard.

16. Moreover, we must also consider the debts owed to the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA) by Municipalities. We have discussed this issue in our last PCF and we edge Municipalities to pay off their debts to AGSA before the new audit cycle resumes on the 01<sup>st</sup> September 2025.
17. Timely financial audits are crucial for accountability and transparency. However, the mounting debts can complicate this process, leading to delayed audits and compromised governance.
18. To address these challenges, we must adopt aggressive debt collection strategies and foster better collaboration between municipalities and provincial departments. This we need to do with the support of the communities.

19. They need to understand and be taken on board on why we must create an environment that encourages timely payments and responsible financial management.

20. On our side, we need to fight corruption for the communities to believe in our government more than before.

### **Eskom Relief Fund**

21. In light of the pressing financial crises faced by our municipalities, we are grateful for the relief brought forth by the Eskom Relief Fund.

22. This initiative aims to alleviate some of the financial burdens on municipalities, especially those struggling with electricity supply disruptions and mounting debts to Eskom.

23. The assistance provided by this fund is a welcome reprieve; however, it is not a long-term solution.

24. We must seize this opportunity to engage in broader conversations about energy sustainability and efficiency in our municipalities, not leaving our communities behind.
25. Establishing energy-saving initiatives and diversifying energy sources can create a more resilient local economy, less dependent on traditional electricity supply chains.
26. This engagement can lead us towards a sustainable future that benefits both our municipalities and our environment.

### **Progress on Remedial Actions for Unfunded Budgets**

27. The issue of unfunded budgets continues to plague our municipalities, posing significant barriers to effective governance and service delivery. Inaction in addressing these unfunded budgets can result in inadequate resources allocated for critical services such as water supply, waste management, and public safety.
28. I have noted with grave concerns the slow progress on implementation of commitments made by Executive



Mayors to reduce unfunded budgets. These commitments will be monitored quarterly through PCF to ensure continuous improvements. We must further focus on better revenue generation strategies, ensuring that municipalities optimize their existing resources.

29. Moreover, we should consider innovative funding mechanisms, partnerships with the private sector, and community-driven initiatives to develop sustainable financing models.

30. By doing so, we equip our municipalities with the necessary resources to fulfil their obligations to the citizens who depend on them, as per their constitutional mandate.

### **Implementation of Audit Action Plans**

31. I can now speak on AG issues with confidence after my office (OTP) received a clean audit after 12 years in 2024/25 financial year after. I now have a voice. I wish to address the crucial matter of implementing the audit action plans by Municipalities. These plans are instrumental in ensuring accountability and integrity within our local governments. However, the effectiveness of these plans

relies on our willingness to act upon the findings and recommendations outlined by the AGSA.

32. It is insufficient merely to acknowledge the reports; we must work diligently to implement corrective measures that lead to improved governance. It is my expectations that by this time all Municipalities should be above 90% on implementation of their audit action plans because in less than 20 days all Municipalities are expected to submit their 2024/25 Annual Financial Statement to AGSA.

33. To achieve this, I call upon all stakeholders, Executive Mayors, MECs and Provincial Departments, and community members, to foster a culture of accountability and transparency.

34. Regular monitoring, combined with **open dialogues about our progress**, will ensure that we remain committed to our responsibilities.

35. As you all are aware, a National Dialogue is starting on 15 to 16 August 2025 at UNISA to find a lasting solution to the challenges facing our country.

36. The current development about the National dialogue must not deter our focus in our contribution to make it a success. We are fully behind the continuation of this very important gathering. We fully agree with Prof. Tinyiko Maluleka, Co-Chair of the National Dialogue Eminent Persons Group that:

**“This is not a talk shop. It is a structured constitutional intervention to rebuild the nation through inclusive dialogue.”**

37. This is what we promised our communities in 1994: that consultation and participatory governance would be our weapon to win the hearts of the people. We can therefore not fail on our plans by not sticking to our promise to the people.

38. I do not see us maximizing the usage of **Livi Lemphakatsi** tool that we have just launched. We need to promote the tool for our communities to use it and we must promptly respond to their queries for them to gain confidence on our responsiveness. Executive Mayors must

continue to encourage our communities through their outreach programmes.

39. We have hotlines where people report some sensitive matters, including reporting to the Presidential hotline. We need the report as the standing item for this meeting on the use of **Livi Lemphakatsi** and our responses to all these issues raised by our communities.

40. In closing, the challenges faced by local government and provincial departments in Mpumalanga Province are significant, but they are not insurmountable.

41. There are matters raised by the unions, NEHAWU and SAMWU on the manner in which we govern and the state of our institutions.

42. I ask myself if the Labour Fora in Municipalities are well equipped and functional since some of these issues are meant to be discussed there and the Council resolves. We need to look into the functionality of these structures so that they can assist the Government in coming up with solutions to employees' challenges.

43. By working collaboratively both National, Provincial and Local Government as well as Private Sector and all other relevant Stakeholders through DDM we can transform the landscape of public service in our province.

44. Let us commit to a future of resilient local governments that are accountable, innovative, and dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for all residents of Mpumalanga.

45. Together, we can overcome these challenges and pave the way for a brighter future.

46. We are meeting today after we have had an opportunity to have all departments presenting their budget vote in the legislature. It was that process that led to Mpumalanga Appropriation Bill (B3-2025) passed by the Legislature.

47. We also had an interesting opportunity of one on one with all departments. We can confirm that the interaction is

also helping all of us to improve and attend some outstanding matters that assist service delivery. We are now presenting our assessment of the departments led by the Macro policy unit from the Office of the Premier.

48. You are all welcome in this PCF and your valuable contribution is always assisting the province to move forward as this collective. Looking forward to your participation on this engagement.

**Thank you.**