

MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

MEDIA STATEMENT

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Attention: News Editors

MPUMALALANGA PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEES SUMMIT LAYS DOWN A SOLID FOUNDATION TOWARDS EFFECTIVE OVERSIGHT FUNCTION

The journey towards supporting an effective oversight function of Municipal Public Accounts Committees in the province started with the hosting of the two day provincial MPAC summit today at the Secunda.

Outlining the purpose of the summit, the Chairperson of the Select Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA); Mr Sibusiso Malaza, laid down clearly defined objectives that are aimed at improving the oversight function of the local and provincial government. "Over the past two decades of our democracy, we are confronted with challenges of translating our oversight into good governance, and the question is what are we doing as MPAC's and SCOPA to improve on this situation?"

Mr Malaza advised the municipal Speakers and chairpersons of MPAC's to find best practices or mechanisms to deal with unauthorised and wasteful expenditure. He further challenged the summit to do self-introspection on what the public accounts committees are not doing right, and get to understand the work of assurance bodies like internal audit committees in order to ensure enhanced and effective oversight.

The meeting noted that the MPAC's are poorly resourced and that there is lack of consequence management.

In delivering his keynote address to the summit, Chairperson of Committees Mr SPD Skhosana ka-Mahlangu added his voice to sentiments already shared by his counterparts.

"It is therefore of significance that time and again we do introspection on how well are we doing in discharging our mandates and identify areas where we need to improve." said Skhosana ka-Mahlangu on the significance of the summit.

The Chair of Committees encouraged the Municipal Speakers to be in the forefront of ensuring that the budget is made available for the resourcing of MPACs.

The MPAC summit on its first day, was also addressed by the MEC for Finance, Economic Development and Tourism; Mr SE Kholwane. MEC Kholwane touched the nerve on issues affecting clean audits and financial viability of municipalities. He highlighted the challenges that are cross-cutting and need to be dealt with, ranging from inadequate interface of the prepaid system with the financial system; failure to update indigent registers; billing systems not reconciled to valuation



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rolls and committing of Councils through contracts that are not performance based with service providers.

“Oversight should be seen as constructive and a critical process, that can’t be done for compliance. The lives of our people depend on those processes, by not doing it correctly we betray their trust in us. We need to ensure that our oversight function impacts positively in the lives of our people” concluded the MEC Kholwane.

The second and last day of the summit will continue tomorrow, Friday 11 August 2017 with a closer look at the establishment of District Forums; Provincial Forum and close with a summit declaration.

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