



Republic of Namibia

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BY

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MINISTER

MINISTRY OF URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

UNITED CITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN AFRICA

SOUTHERN AFRICA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

MONDAY, 3RD SEPTEMBER 2018

WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA

Director of Ceremonies;

The Acting President of UCLGA – SARO;

His Worship the Mayor of the City of Windhoek,

Hon. Muesee Kazapua;

The President of ALAN, Hon. Katrina Shimbulu;

**Presidents of the various Local Government
Association in the Southern Africa Region;**

All the Mayors & Councillors Present;

Secretaries General of the Association;

Members of the media;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

**I would like right at the onset to express my sincere
gratitude for the invitation to deliver the keynote
address at this official opening of the United Cities
and Local Governments in Africa Southern Africa
General Assembly.**

This multilateral forum brings together the third tier of government structures to discuss issues affecting the daily lives of our people, both in suburbs and rural areas. At the very outset, I would like to remind delegates that the mandate to represent people in local governments as councillors is a responsibility that should be discharged with humility and integrity in the course of leading, delivering services, developing our communities and, with these communities, creating a better life for all.

**Director of Ceremonies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Local governments face major challenges, like the reduction of unemployment, improved access to better quality basic services, overcoming the legacy of apartheid spatial development, strengthening community participation, and building a more responsive, accountable, effective and efficient Local Government.

Both the public and private sector working with communities need to improve service delivery, create jobs, combat crime and corruption, improve healthcare and education and develop rural areas to ensure food production and security.

As we have undertaken the mammoth task of building a responsive, accountable, effective and efficient Local Government, we should ensure that we have realised our goals of serving people with excellence. In order to achieve this, we need commitment, dedication and decisiveness. The responsibility we have been entrusted with calls for bold leadership but also requisite support from other spheres and key strategic partners to ensure that municipalities deliver on their statutory mandate.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To enable local government to effectively contribute towards the Sustainable Development Goals, the African Union vision/Agenda 2063, it is important that we need to critically look at the impact of rapid urbanisation as this means that means that 65% of the global population will be living in cities.

The impact of these changes is seen most clearly in the cities across the continent, and in its many small states/town. The urban population in the Commonwealth currently stands at 38% although levels of urbanisation vary significantly from country to country. Rapid urbanisation results in a complex set of democracy, governance and management challenges ranging from poor and unplanned settlements, limited infrastructure capacity, lack of housing, poor security and lack of public transport (all key issues which have been picked up in SDG 11) which seeks to recognise the unique challenges of urbanisation with a set of dedicated targets to support cities and human settlements.

It is against this backdrop that the Southern Regional Countries are asking themselves what kind of governments they will need in order to respond effectively to the challenges of the future, and within that broader conversation.

Further, there is a need to synchronise our programmes and plans for urban and rural developments.

Esteemed Delegates,

There should be a debate on the kind of local government that is needed, and what changes are required in terms of conceptual thinking, policies, resourcing and implementation capacity, to ensure that local government has the power, capacity and authority to deliver effectively and to play a full role in responding to local needs and priorities, national development plans and in supporting the effective implementation of the SDGs in order for governments to achieve their respective visions.

The urban challenges are a priority for development in the region and highlights the region's key challenges:

- **upgrading of informal settlements and access to safe and affordable housing;**
- **Provision of basic infrastructure and services, urban resilience to climate and disaster risks, rural-urban linkages, gender equality, job creation, planning management, data collection and analysis to mention but a few.**

There is a general acknowledgement of the huge amount of public and private investments needed to promote prosperity, cope with the impact of climate change, and to eradicate poverty.

Therefore, Local and regional governments need to find ways of mobilising the wealth produced in their areas of jurisdiction to finance and support development, and have access to long-term revenues and strengthen their capacities to deliver sustainable and pro-poor services.

**Director of Ceremonies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I believe that this platform will not only serves to deliberate and elect the new leadership but will come up with a position paper that will be considered and to be further discussed with Local Government Ministers, stakeholders and development partners.

With this few words, I hereby official open the Regional Assembly and wish you all fruitful deliberation.

I thank you