



MTHATHA CHURCH LEADERS

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Municipal Stakeholders Cooperation Workshop

Partnerships to implement the objectives of the National Development Plan (NDP) – The role of churches and faith communities

Date: Monday, 19 August 2019

Venue: Garden Court Hotel, Nelson Mandela Drive, Mthatha, Eastern Cape Province

Workshop Report

The workshop was opened with remarks by Father Richard Menatsi (Catholic Church in South Africa). Pastor Don Phillips (Rhema Umtata Christian Church) opened the workshop with prayer.

Delegates were welcomed by Bishop Sitembele Sipuka (Catholic Church in South Africa) and Minister Xolile Nqatha (Member of Executive Council/ MEC and Provincial Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Eastern Cape Provincial Government). The delegates were comprised of Church Leaders and Government Officials, including Mayors, Members of Mayoral Committees, Municipal Managers, amongst others.



Bishop Sipuka welcoming workshop participants.

The objectives of the workshop were introduced by Dr Renier Koegelenberg (NRASD). The fostering of partnership between municipalities and the churches at local level was stated as one of the objectives, within the broader national framework of implementing the National Development Plan.

The statement on workshop objectives was followed by two presentations, i.e.:

1. Municipal Accountability – Stakeholder Engagement, by Ms Vuyiwe Hani (Virdus Works), and
2. The Community Works Programme, by Mr Dupré Lombaard (Virdus Works).

These presentations placed focus on the following points:

1. The mandate of local government is to provide services and goods to communities.
2. This mandate had to be achieved with the involvement of communities, who had to play a role in determining their needs, and who could contribute to addressing their needs via participation in community-based programmes. The role of communities was thus not limited to receiving services and keeping government accountable for the provision of such services.
3. Current opportunities and resources existed for joint programmes to be pursued between municipalities and the churches, in which persons in communities could be mobilised as active participants in community-based development.

Against this background, a discussion session followed that was facilitated by Father Menatsi.

As part of opening comments during the discussion, Minister Nqatha remarked that the language of government was that “government will deliver”, which left persons in communities sitting back, waiting on government to deliver. This language did not enhance a sense of civic responsibility.



MEC Nqatha engaging in discussion with Church Leaders.

Bishop Sipuka noted that churches could enhance a sense of active citizenry amongst parishioners as persons in communities. He requested that joint programmes between municipalities and churches be developed, to address the basic needs of persons to live with dignity. To this end, the capacity of persons is to be built, to enable persons to feed themselves, to acquire decent shelter, and to become employable. The churches also possessed experience to inculcate values and ethical behaviour, as persons had to take ownership and responsibility for their own development, and to live in good relationships with those in their households and communities.

The development of a partnership between the municipalities and the churches had to be guided by procedure. It was proposed that a working group be formed, tasked with the development of a concept proposal. Such a proposal could guide cooperation between the municipalities and the churches as partners to implement selected programmes. Viridus Works could be approached to assist with the development of a concept proposal, that could serve as basis for discussion at the next meeting of the working group.

The churches would be represented on the working group by: Bishop Sipuka (Catholic Church in South Africa), Bishop Ndwandwe (Anglican Church of Southern Africa), and Pastor Phillips (Rhema Umtata Christian Church). The municipalities would nominate senior members to serve on the working group. In addition, coordinators would be selected by the municipalities and the churches as drivers of the process to ensure progress. It was proposed by Minister Nqatha and Bishop Sipuka that the churches take a leading role to drive progress.

The workshop was closed by Bishop Nkosinathi Ndwandwe (Anglican Church of Southern Africa), who thanked all delegates for their participation, and he expressed the hope for concrete results to be achieved.



Workshop Delegates Group Photo. Seated in front from left to right are: Bishop Sipuka, Provincial Minister Nqatha, Bishop Ndwandwe and Pastor Phillips.

