

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS 2011**

I S MFUNDISI

(UCDP)

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The local government elections are only three weeks down the line and the incumbent political party is at pains to douse flames of discontent among citizens and importantly among its own members who complain not only of poor service delivery but also of some crying out that their elected candidates have not been considered for placement on the lists.

The problems besetting local governance in the province have been self-inflicted by the ruling party by effectively turning the then MEC into one without portfolio thus leaving the department without political oversight.

The incumbent MEC is trying his utmost to extinguish fires by even turning into a radio personality by attending radio talkshows to beef up his colleagues whom he has reservations that they will depict a good picture of what is going on.

As at November last year, municipalities were owed over R 4bn in the province. There is no way that with so much owed it could be expected that delivery should be up to scratch. The government should do all in their might to educate the public that there is nothing for free.

We appeal to the MEC as a high ranking official of the SANCO to prevail upon his colleagues and those in the unions to put the interests of the province and the country first. The filth that is

mounting in the street corners of almost all towns is nothing to write home about.

We have no doubt that local government needs strong leadership and clear vision. Municipal officers should discharge their responsibilities with prudence and in an efficient, transparent and accountable manner.

The fundamental goal of a good democratic system is citizen satisfaction. The effectiveness of good local governance has to be judged by the capacity of local government structures to provide an integrated development approach to social and economic development issues and to supply essential services congruent with the needs and desires of local communities.

If such communities have no water for prolonged periods and they are told the government is only 17 years old, it is unacceptable. Equally so is if they are expected to pay for services and yet they are being serviced. Karl Marx was right when he said that taxation without representation is tyranny. People cannot be expected to dole out funds yet their interests are not taken on board.

We have seen local governance stumble from crisis to crisis and efforts made to assist without success. First it was *Masakhane*, then came Project Consolidate but all to no avail.

I have listened intently as the Hon MEC gave reports and naming municipalities where they have registered progress on repayments, provision of water and others but he did not mention the one with 10 ghost workers by name. It surely is a case of “altyd die blink kant bo hou”.

On the page on traditional affairs, the department is hampered by its obsession to appoint administrators who serve as siphon to sip all the juice from traditional authorities that have mineral resources.

The question that goes begging is what happened to ethnologists who would research and find out who are entitled to *bogosi* in a particular traditional authority.

It is astounding that municipalities like Moses Kotane and Mafikeng have to be prompted to action by the SABC programme “improving lives” in order to identify indigent families. Were it not of that programme Nkoko Motlhabane and her grandchildren would still be living in a tent a whole year after their house was damaged in a storm.

We welcome the on-going election process with regard to traditional councils while we hope that the sun will rise on the morning of another day when *dikgosi* will not only qualify as *ex officio* members of municipal councils as is the case at provincial and national parliaments.

We have accepted and still subscribe to the saying that every square centimeter of the Republic will be ruled by elected people.

The UCDP supports the budget vote.