

Budget vote on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs

UCDP : Hon IC Ditshetelo

Tuesday, May 8, 2012

OAC, 14:00 to 16:30

Chairperson,

Having missed the opportunity to say a few words when the Condolence motion of former Minister Sicelo Shiceka was passed, let me take this opportunity to convey deepest condolences to his family, his colleagues in the department, his friends, and his political home the ANC. We can only hope that he's been called to higher service by his higher power.

Local Governance has always been a thorny issue in this democratic dispensation, which is always an unfortunate scenario as it impacts directly to service delivery, therefore meaning that ordinary citizens are mostly deprived whenever decision makers err from following prescripts. Local government also gets a lot of warranted attention from media and other interested parties. It is thus pleasing to note that in spite of the problems faced, there has been consistent commitment towards changing for the better, and such projects and campaigns have not gone unnoticed, projects like Operation Clean Audit. The promulgation of the Municipal Systems Amendment Act could not have come at a better moment and we all hope to see it fully implemented across all municipalities and we hope its implementation shall achieve the desired result with regards to the ongoing fight against fraud and corruption.

Another area of concern, is when the Department sets targets that have direct linkage to quality of lifestyles led by our people and then dismally fail in execution or implementation. We deem it unacceptable that the Department

targeted to have 32 town and cities participating in implementation of clean towns and cities and only eight participants. In effect it says most our towns and cities are unclean and an unclean environment has a direct impact to healthy standards of the inhabitants. Now, if we fail town or city cleanliness tests, I shudder to think what must be happening to our peri-urban settings and rural settings

Implementation of programmes in local government needs to move beyond just meeting reporting standards or standards of the Auditor General, but must make tangible difference in people's lives. Be that as it may, we welcome the not-so-good-enough improvement of seven municipalities receiving clean audits. Its certainly is not good enough when the number of those that had worse than before audits is sitting at 15! However, the fact that 57 municipalities had improved audits testifies that the tailor made Municipal Turnaround Strategies are yielding results.

We welcome the increase in allocation for the Infrastructure and Economic Development Programme, this indeed is in line with the president's commitment that he made at the beginning of the year. We can then hope that the usual impediments shall be dealt with and that corruption shall not stand in the way of an opportunity to build better infrastructure and thereby creating job opportunities.

I also would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge work of the CRL Commission, their efforts and research work on cultural, religious, and linguistic issues is important, but of more importance will be how their research work is channelled towards eradicating existing problems in these areas.

The UCDP supports this vote.