



Address by Public Protector Adv Thuli Madonsela on the occasion of a stakeholder consultative forum at Flamingo Casino in Kimberley, Northern Cape

22 February 2010

**Programme Director,
Judge President Diale Kgomo,
Deputy Public Protector Mamiki Shai,
Provincial Electoral Officer Mr J Bekebeke,
Commissioner for the Commission of Gender Equality Ms Meruti,
Executive Mayor of Frances Baard District Municipality Mr A Florence,
Executive Mayor of Sol Plaatjie Municipality Mr P Everyday,
Mayor of Magareng Municipality Mrs G Makena,
Mayor of Phokwane Municipality Mr V Khen,
Head of Department for the Department of Corporate and Government Affairs, Human Settlement and Traditional Affairs Mr B Swartland,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen;**

Allow me to seize this moment and extend my warmest greetings to all of you for having heeded our call to gather here this morning. We are grateful for the fact that you found space in your busy schedules to slot us in.

That you found time to be with us despite this being one of the busiest times for most organisations as they prepare for the financial year that lies ahead is an indication that this engagement is as important to you as it is to us.

In the same vein I would like to emphasise the point that we, at Public Protector South Africa, consider engagements of this nature extremely critical and central to the course of fully delivering on our mandate.

I am sure you would have noticed from recent media reports that the Public Protector has, since the early this month, embarked on a seven-week national road show, during which we meet with stakeholders with an aim to jointly path the way this institution will take over the next few years. Well, today is Northern Cape's turn.

In a nutshell, the objectives of this exercise are to introduce myself to you as the newly-

appointed Public Protector and engage you on the proposed Public Protector Vision 2020 with the aim of soliciting your comments and inputs. I will expand on this later in my speech.

Through these meetings ladies and gentlemen, we further aim to build trust, maintain good relations and establish what your expectations are regarding the responsiveness of the Public Protector, among other things.

Programme Director, I am aware that most if not all of the people in here know what is a Public Protector and the role thereof. However, allow me to briefly give some background about this institution for the benefit of those who may not be aware.

The Public Protector is one of the institutions established in terms of Chapter Nine of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. This institution receives and resolves complaints from the public regarding conduct and services by state organs and officials.

Empowered to investigate, mediate, negotiate, conciliate and take corrective action, the Public Protector exists to ensure that there is an accountable and responsive public administration in South Africa.

The Public Protector is independent of government and political parties and therefore we carry out our responsibilities impartially without fear, favour or prejudice.

Even though the Public Protector receives complaints from the public, it should be eloquently communicated that this institution is not an attorney for the public. We are more like a referee who looks at both sides of the problem to ensure accountable and fair governance by the state.

In other words, should our investigations reveal no wrong doing on the part of state organs or officials; we will say so in that same way we do when the opposite is the case.

Ladies and gentlemen;

As the Public Protector, one of our biggest challenges is lack co-operation from government departments in terms of responding to queries as we carry out our investigations.

I'm glad to announce that in this province, co-operation from state organs is generally satisfactory. We have seen a significant improvement from the likes of SASSA, Human Settlements and the Sol Plaatjie Municipality. However, more still needs to be done. Plans are afoot to hold meetings with heads of the few departments that are still problematic with a view to sort out the challenges.

Most of the complaints we get in this province relate to municipal service. The fact that local government is located at the coal face of the provision of basic services such as water and housing illustrates the urgency of attending to bottlenecks that hold back delivery.

History teaches us that, even though we strongly condemn it, communities embark on violent protests whenever government does not deliver on its responsibilities.

The Chapter Nine and Associates Forum which was launched in Kuruman nearly 12 months ago is a step in the right direction. This is a forum in which all members pledge to work together and support each other on their responsibilities to achieve a common goal.

To date, we have signed Memorandums of Understanding with four institutions including the SA Human Rights Commission, the Commission of Gender Equality and the Independent Electoral Commission. More are yet to sign on the dotted line and we encourage them to do so.

Programme Director,

The Public Protector Vision 2020 I referred to earlier is our proposed vision for the next ten years. I believe copies of this document have been circulated to all of you. We have already received valuable feedback on the draft we circulated to some stakeholders December 2009. I would really appreciate your comments on it. It reads as follows:

Vision

A trusted, effective and accessible Public Protector that rights wrongs and consistently acts with integrity to ensure fair, accountable and responsive decision-making, service and good governance in all state affairs and public administration in any sphere of government.

Mission

We serve the public in accordance with our constitutional mandate by rectifying and redressing any improper or prejudicial conduct in state affairs and resolving related disputes through mediation, conciliation, negotiation and other measures to ensure fair, responsive and accountable public sector decision-making and service delivery.

Values

- Independence and impartiality;
- Human Dignity;
- Equality;
- Ubuntu and Empathy;
- Redress;
- Accountability;
- Integrity;
- Responsiveness;
- Transparency; and
- Justice and Fairness.

To complement these, we will be guided by three core principles namely Accountability, Integrity and Responsiveness.

We have also proposed strategic objectives for the next three years as the mechanism for ensuring, among others, prompt remedial action for all wrongs committed by public authorities and that good governance generally is achieved in the conduct of all state affairs.

In conclusion, ladies and gentlemen, I look forward to healthy yet robust discussions regarding the issues I have mentioned in my address.

I trust that our effort will bear fruit by way of ensuring accountability and a responsive service delivery in the public sector for the benefit of the all persons in the country.

I thank you.