

**WELCOMING REMARKS BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR DURING  
THE NATIONAL SALGA WORKING GROUP VISIT TO THE  
DISTRICT**

**05 SEPTEMBER 2022**

**EUPHORIA GOLF ESTATE**

The National Chairperson of the Working Group Cllr. Ngwezi,  
The Provincial Chairpersons of Working Groups,  
The PDO of SALGA Limpopo Ms. Ledile Sebati,  
Members of the Provincial Working Group present,  
Officials present,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed a pleasure and privilege for me to be part of this important session of officially welcoming you to the Working Group session hosted by the Waterberg District.

On behalf of the community of Waterberg we are very pleased to host a forum of this magnitude and feel honoured to be visited by delegates of your calibre.

Chairperson, amongst the most challenging goals which the country has set itself for is to try to combine development with sustainable use of the environment.

The broad range of interests represented here is eloquent proof of the concern towards the environment that is felt throughout our society. That concern augurs well for the future of our environment and indeed the very quality of life of our people in the next century.

One of the hall-marks of the democracy which South Africans are creating is the spirit of partnership which permeates our society.

In policy matters in particular, the readiness of government to consult, and of civil society to share responsibility, are amongst the most striking ways in which we have broken with the past. The new ethos if fully captured in this National Working Group as well as all the processes that will follow, can present a unique opportunity for society to participate in policy formulation.

In the end, the resolutions which will emerge from this structure, should be the repository of the nation's wisdom on this critical matter.

Ladies and gentlemen; the environmental damage in our country, resulting from years of neglect, is massive. As we set on the course of bettering the lives of the people, we need to find ways to harness the positive links between development and the environment, so that each objective promotes the other.

And we need policies targeted at specific environmental problems. Our environmental policy must take account, amongst other things, of the following:

- the reasonable rights of people to live in an acceptable environment, balancing the rights of present and future generations;
- the need to establish an equilibrium between the demand for natural resources and their availability;
- the need for sustained economic development; and lastly,
- the maintenance of renewable natural resources; the judicious use of non-renewable resources; and the reduction of pollution.

We must have development but it would be tragic if we pursued it in a way that exhausts our resources and denies our children and their children the prospect of a dignified existence.

We have to manage our environment in such a way that we can attend to short-term needs, while planning and doing research to protect the country's long-term interests.

South Africa has environmental problems that could jeopardise our future. Our minerals will not last forever; our energy resources are limited; our marine resources are vulnerable and water has already become a growth limiting factor.

These problems can be addressed in one way or another. But mismanagement of the land has devastating long-term consequences. If our soil is lost, it is lost forever. If it is inappropriately used, the consequences are permanent.

Chairperson, amongst other things, this makes spatial planning and the orderly development of infrastructure and housing extremely important. We are very sensitive to the needs of people to have a place to live; but unlawful occupation of land cannot be acceptable.

Ladies and gentlemen; we all understand that the environmental challenges of the modern world extend far beyond the survival of single species or merely the well-being of nature.

These challenges cannot be surmounted by government alone, but will need inputs from the whole South African community.

This forum should therefore be digesting possible solutions to all these environmental and climate challenges. As you do so, you will need to keep your feet on the ground of practical realities and affordability, without losing the vision of what is possible to achieve.

On your shoulders rests a great responsibility. You are initiating a policy process of great momentum. Much will turn on the quality of your deliberations, and on the effectiveness with which you follow them up. Thus we can all contribute to the care of our environment and thereby secure a better life for all.

In conclusion, Ladies and gentlemen, i want to take this opportunity to once more welcome you to Waterberg District, the eco-tourism destination region with a great variety of wildlife, birds and scenic splendour.

A mountainous region with game and nature reserves which forms an extensive internationally recognised biosphere. This is the only district municipality in the province which managed to obtain the “Clean Audit Outcome” from the Office of the AG.

On behalf of the Council and citizens of Waterberg, we wish you fruitful deliberations and success in your endeavours during your stay here.

**I THANK YOU!!**