

John Taolo Gaetsewe District Municipality hosts IDP Lekgotla.

The John Taolo Gaetsewe District Municipality held a two day lekgotla at the Red Sands resort outside Kuruman, from 3 to 4 March 2016. The objective of the Legotla was among others to align and report on the programs and activities of various state entities, Municipalities and provincial government departments towards the provision of various services to communities within and around the district. It (the lekgotla) was attended by among others Mayors, Councilors, Municipal Managers and officials of various municipalities, managers and officials of provincial and regional government departments including the Premier's office, DENC, Roads, Eskom, Education, Social Development, Health, Rural Development and Salga among others. Civil Society was also substantially represented at the lekgotla. The JTG District Municipality was represented Executive Mayor Councilor Sofia Mosikatsi who officially opened the lekgotla and welcomed everybody, Members of the Mayoral Committee Municipal Manager, Councilors and Senior Managers.

Presiding at the lekgotla, the Manager for IDP and planning at the JTG district Municipality Mr. Gerrie Van Der Westhuizen informed delegates that it was important that various state entities align their programmes in order to maximize resources



allocated to them by towards effective service delivery. Effective coordination of programmes and cooperation between various state entities cannot be overemphasized added Van Der Westhuizen.

Various Sector Departments present at the Lekgotla submitted their plans and programmes, outlining achievements and challenges encountered in the past financial years and plans for the 2016/2017 financial years and beyond. What became evident during the various deliberations was the need for more communication and cooperation among the various entities even though each institution follows specific areas of specialization. Cooperative and inclusive governance aimed at sustainable development is essential. The importance of sound intergovernmental relations has become even greater.

One of the issues that was frequently discussed and seemed to be a matter of concern for most delegates at the lekgotla was the depressed economic climate prevailing throughout the world, the country and inevitably including the municipalities. What makes the situation more worrying within the JTG District are the impending job cuts at the various mines due to the decline in the prices of commodities such as iron ore. Mining has been the key economic driving force in the District and the current conditions necessitates the need for economic diversification and participation. As a result other economic sectors such as agriculture need to be given extra attention and resources in order to close the economic gap that is going to result from the inevitable shedding of jobs. Presenting the Kumba Anglo American's submission at the Lekgotla, the Community Liaison of mine outlined the factors that led to the decision for the restructuring of personnel and operations at the mine which has become a source of concern among communities of the JTG District. The main factor is the decline in the demand of their commodities especially irons ore.

The Executive Mayor, Councilor Mosikatsi also informed delegates that the District Rural Developmental Plan has already been adopted by council and it is perceived to be the best and most comprehensive not only in the province but the whole country.

During the deliberations and submissions by various departments the need to grow the District economy was discussed. The National Developmental Plan, which is in essence a thirty year plan was mentioned, as it is a thirty (30) year developmental blueprint for economic growth, job creation and subsequently the elimination of poverty, inequality and unemployment. It was further noted that economic growth and job creation were not proceeding at the required rate and must be accelerated to meet the ever growing demands and needs of communities. Furthermore what is needed is economic growth and development that increases the standard of living of all communities. Effective communication and public participation is necessary for knowledge sharing and information dissemination. Delegates further agreed that tourism product development

and black industrialists need to be enhanced and promoted towards the realization of the objectives of the NDP. In essence this means that manufacturing and industrialization have to be encouraged and supported and that will as a result require that serious attention be given to skills development

The lekgotla was concluded with the Executive Mayor of JTG District Municipality Councilor Sofia Mosikatsi thanking delegates for their participation and inputs. She further made a plea that cooperation and collaborations continue to take place among state organs in the planning and execution of their programmes towards addressing the imbalances of the past, with an effort to deal with issues of poverty, inequality and unemployment while accelerating the delivery of services, and with specific bias towards the rural and impoverished areas and communities. A draft IDP document will be submitted to Council at the end of March, and the final one including the budget to be adopted by Council by the end of April 2016