REMARKS BY HONOURABLE MEC FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT MRS SIPHOKAZI LUSITHI ON HIGH-LEVEL STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS – STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION - 07 AUGUST 2019

HOD: Ntombekhaya Baart;

Chief Directors

Senior Managers

Ladies and Gentlemen

I greet you all,

We convene here today at the first strategic planning session of the 2018/19 financial year and towards the end of Mid Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) 2014 – 2019 for the Department of Social Development.

More importantly, this Strategic Plan Session sits exactly in the second half of the last year of the MTSF. This session, therefore, offers us not just the opportunity to plan but also gives us an opportunity to reflect on our successes and failures.

The MTSF reflects the electoral mandate, with an emphasis on implementing the National Development Plan (NDP) it also sets out the

actions and targets to be achieved. This then provides a framework for other plans of national, provincial and local government.

The department's work over the medium term also gives effect to Outcome 13 of government's 2014-2019 Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) – an inclusive and responsive social protection system.

This means that our department stands at the strategic axis of implementing the strategic vision of ensuring that we deliver on the mandate of the ruling party of ensuring we build a prosperous society for all.

This, therefore, means that you as public servants and administrators of social development have a critical task of driving this vision and ensuring that we accelerate the delivery of this strategic vision.

Colleagues, it's been 20 years since the Department of Social Development was changed from social welfare to social development but this in my view has not translated into a change firstly, on how the department plans, works and the character of its programmes and its priorities.

As part of our endeavours in building healthy and functioning families we need we need to apply the developmental approach in how we understand

the family-based model: for instance, the mother must not just be viewed as a person who must only manage the domestic side of things in the family structure whilst and the men must participate in the economic sustaining of the family. In essence co-parenting should be a central focus of building a strong family unit.

We must, therefore, have a very serious discussion about the strategic outlook of our department and ask the question***: have we been able through our programmes to drive a developmental and transformation agenda?***

The 6th administration has been clear in ensuring that in the next five years we must deliberately entrench our philosophy of delivering on Social Development on both a rights-based framework within a developmental paradigm.

In this regard, the emphasis is that our vision for an inclusive and responsive social protection system must be underpinned by a developmental orientation to service delivery. We further recommit ourselves to articulation by the Minister on the role of the department within the context of a developmental state. This articulation is to: ***"ensure that in the recent future, the children of the current generation of social grants beneficiaries embark on a different pathway to sustainable livelihoods to realise their full potential. To this end, we will use the government's procurement and investment in the social assistance programme to stimulate local economic development initiatives."***

In our engagement with our business of the next two days here, we must take into account the ANC's manifesto that was crafted during the run-up to the recently held peaceful elections. The manifesto lays the foundation of what is expected of us in the coming five years, and it is upon all of us here to ensure that it is implemented for the creation of a society that we envisage to build.

The key strategic focus areas that must be translated into our operations for the next 5 years are the following:

1. **Early Childhood Development (ECD)**

The Department continues to be confronted by challenges of poor and inadequate ECD facilities given the extent of our challenges, there is a need to build new ECD infrastructure.

We need to invest in the development of ECD so that it also reaches the informal and unregistered ECD centres assists more ECD Informal and Unregistered ECDs and promote innovation on different models for delivering home and community-based ECDs.

Moreover, In the next five years, we need to make plans on how do we capacitate and also ensure the retaining of trained ECD practitioners.

2. NPO Management and Monitoring

We need to increase the rigor significantly around performance management to ensure we achieve better use of our resources and value-for-money. We have a serious challenge with the payments of NPOs on time and allegations of corruption within the system we need to address this problem.

As part of strengthening accountability in NPO management, future consideration must be given to beefing up the capacity of our NPO Units in the Department with more technical and administrative skills so as to ensure that funds are spent appropriately and in line with the NPO Act.

As part of our monitoring, a verification and validation process must be undertaken to verify active and non-active organisations.

Moreover, we must ensure the economic contribution and impact of the NPO`s over an agreed period of time and this can be measured amongst the key factors such as employment opportunities, economic beneficiation from procurement and social upliftment goals.

The department must have a clear plan on how it capacitates and supports NPO`s to ensure that they are able to be sustainable.

We must also be working towards the conclusion of various forensic reports and improving monitoring. Our Information Technology System must be enhanced and seriously monitored to curb the challenge of late transfer payments and weaknesses in the system.

3. Improvements in Organizational Performance

The improvements in the performance of the organisation must be premised and guided by the extent to which the political directives inform our strategic outlook in the next five years.

Therefore, the Turn Around Strategy must be in line with the political directives and also serve as a vehicle to improve our organisational performance.

This means that we must work more seriously to finalise the process of reviewing our organizational structure so that it aligns with the Turn Around Strategy and must ensure that the Department has requisite skills needed to enable it to deliver on its mandate.

Colleagues, if we are going to succeed in the next 5 years we need to improve our approach to organisational planning to be more integrated. This means that different components of the department must not work in silos and we work towards the institutionalisation of IGR.

As a department, we need to have at a service office level to firstly understand the challenges and possible areas of improvement so as to

align them with our broad strategic thinking of positioning the department as a driver of our development paradigm.

We need to address the glaring gap between policy formulation and policy implementation and must commit ourselves to focus on policy implementation through the strengthening of accountability structures for the effective implementation of our programmes.

4. **Provision of Sanitary Dignity**

As part of bringing dignity to women, we need to be bold in our initiatives of creating awareness and bold campaigns against gender-based violence.

We need to look at how we strengthen our partnership with the Department of Education and Health to intensify the Sanitary Dignity Campaign Program to female learners in Grade 4 to grade 12 in Quintile 1 schools for this financial year.

Colleagues, we need to mobilize more social partners to take the sanitary towels campaign to even greater heights from now onwards, in our endeavour to provide girls with uninterrupted education. Going forward we need to have a ring-fenced budget on this matter and to also include female leaners in Quintile 2 schools.

There is a need to look at how economic beneficiation can be extended to the disadvantaged communities particularly women, youth and people living with disabilities.

5. **Youth and Women Development**

The Department must work with greater effort to unleash the economic potential of our young people and rural communities by ensuring that they have access to skills, assets, and opportunities.

We must ensure mainstreaming and prioritisation of the economic empowerment of young people and women across all programmes and this must reflect in our planning. We need to lead the Provincial youth development strategy.

In Conclusion:

With regards to the serious foster care backlog, we need to have a bilateral approach with SASSA on how we better manage and the sharing of resources towards addressing the provincial foster care backlog.

The effective use of our IGR and inter-sectoral collaborations must be strengthened to address implementation challenges and enhance foster care management.

Colleagues must be embarking on an analysis of the Auditor Generals findings and so that we can implement immediate consequential management measures where required.

In this regard, an internal audit improvement plan must have developed to strengthen current practices in relation to planning, accounting procedures, internal control system and financial reporting. **In practice, no performance bonuses should be paid to officials where audit outcomes have no tangible improvements.**

As we do our work in the next five years we must be inspired by the principle of ***Batho Pele: The People First***

I wish all of us a productive and efficient two days.

I thank you.