



**YOUR X IS YOUR SAY**

**SPEAKING NOTES FOR**

**ACTING PROVINCIAL ELECTORAL OFFICER**

**THABO MASEMULA**

**AT THE CODE OF CONDUCT SIGNING CEREMONY**

**NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS 2019**

**CAPITAL EMPIRE**

**9 APRIL 2019**

## **WELCOME**

### **Thank you Programme Director:**

- Vice Chairperson of Electoral Commission: Commissioner Janet Love
- Chief Electoral Officer of the IEC: Mr. Sy Mamabolo
- Deputy CEO: Electoral Matters and Deputy CEO- Outreach & Communication
- Provincial Election Officers of Free State, Northern Cape, Limpopo and Mpumalanga; Municipal Electoral Officers and Gauteng Provincial IEC Staff
- Honourable MEC of COGTA: Mr Uhuru Moiloa
- Honourable MEC of Economic Development: Mr Lebohang Maile
- Speaker of the Gauteng Provincial Legislature: Ms Ntombi Mekgwe
- Leaders of Political Parties
- Director General in the Office of the Premier: Ms Phindile Baleni
- Head of Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs: Ms Thandeka Mbassa
- Gauteng Provincial Police Commissioner: Lieutenant-General Elias Mawela
- Municipal Managers
- Representatives of civil society including faith-based organisations, NGOs, traditional leaders, business and labour organisations and other interest groups
- Members of the media, Honoured Guests, Ladies and gentlemen

- It is my great privilege to welcome you all on behalf of the Electoral Commission to today's Gauteng Province Official signing of the Code of Conduct in preparation for the South Africa's sixth democratic national and provincial elections.
- Perhaps it is appropriate that at this point I indicate that even though the ballot box is the prism through which the South African Society experiences an election; an election is nonetheless more than just a technical act of marking a ballot.
- In a sense, elections are about giving effect to a constitutional value system. When citizens vote they are in fact engaging in an act of constitutionalism, they are reaffirming our status as a vibrant constitutional democracy.
- Today, we give impetus to this noble proposition that we are indeed a vibrant constitutional democracy.

### **The Constitutional Framework**

- Free and fair elections are the cornerstone of a democratic dispensation.
- As a consequence, Democracy is a fundamental and indispensable principle of government in South Africa.
- Very early on when we crafted our Constitution, we declared in the preamble that the Republic of South Africa provides that government must be based on the "will of the people".
- Section 1 of the Constitution sets out the values on which South Africa is founded:

- These include a universal adult suffrage, a national common voters' roll, regular elections, and a multi-party system of democratic government.

In an open and democratic society, citizens express their will through elections. In this regard, elections are based on—and must be conducted in accordance with—the above democratic values. Political rights are particularly important given South Africa's history in which the majority of its citizens were denied political rights.

Section 19 of the Constitution provides as follows:

“(1) Every citizen is free to make political choices, which includes the right--

(a) to form a political party;

(b) to participate in the activities of, or recruit members for, a political party; and

(c) to campaign for a political party or cause.

(2) Every citizen has the right to free, fair and regular elections for any legislative body established in terms of the Constitution.

(3) Every adult citizen has the right--

(a) to vote in elections for any legislative body established in terms of the Constitution, and to do so in secret; and (b) to stand for public office and, if elected, to hold office.”

These rights and values are safeguarded by a number of civil and political rights in the Constitution

## **PREPARATIONS FOR THE ELECTIONS**

### **Distinguished Guests**

- Over the past 21 months the Electoral Commission has been hard at work laying the groundwork for this year's elections.

- In this regard, I am pleased to report that our preparations have reached an advanced stage.
- As we speak today, deliveries of Election Materials to local storage facilities around the province commenced on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April and will be concluded within reasonable time.

## **DELIMITATION**

- We have concluded the re-delimitation of voting districts to ensure that we further improve the accessibility to voting opportunities for all Gauteng citizens especially those who live in transient communities such as informal settlements.
- This has seen the number of voting districts grow from 2 716 in 2016 to 2 771 for this year's election.
- This is an increase of approximately 60 voting districts since the 2016 Municipal Elections – and about 184 more than the 2014 elections
- We are also pleased that while increasing the total number of voting stations, we concurrently decreased the number of temporary voting stations in the Province.
- The net import of increased voting stations is to enhance ease access and to reduce the waiting period at voting stations.
- Our planning currently makes provision for 302 temporary voting stations—compared to 4 72 in 2014 – a decrease of a whopping 63 percent

## **POLITICAL PARTIES CONTESTING NPE 2019**

### **Distinguished Guests**

- **Candidate lists and parties**

The deadline for the submission of party candidate lists and payment of election deposits has come and gone, resulting in a record 36 political parties which will be contesting for the 73 seats in the Gauteng Provincial Legislature.

This is 14 more political parties than that contested the 2014 Provincial Elections.

### **A record number of Political Parties has the following implications:**

- **Logistics and costs:**

- Longer ballot papers for national and provincial elections
- Need for additional ballot boxes (they will fill quicker)
- Significant increase in cost of printing, transport, storage
- This is likely to impact on the count votes and process results

- **Training and capacity:**

- Each party is by law allowed 2 party agents per voting station – this could mean up to 96 party agents per voting station
- This has implications for training and for space within voting stations (party agents may have to take turns to observe all processes due to space constraints in the voting stations)
- Additional space needed in Results Operations Centres to accommodate all parties

## **VOTER'S ROLL**

- The voters' roll has been certified and published.
- The Province of Gauteng has the highest registered voters.
- Gauteng remains the biggest voting bloc in the country with 6 387 000 registered voters. Percentage wise, this represents 25% of the total National Voters' roll.

## **VOTER EDUCATION**

- The constitution enjoins the IEC to ensure that elections are free and fair.
- Elections cannot be free and fair if those participating in them are not sufficiently informed about the processes.
- Consequently, the IEC in the province employed a cohort of additional 240 voter education facilitators that were deployed across the province to provide voter education to key stakeholders including the youth, the disabled and the elderly.
- Currently these voter education facilitators are providing the provincial citizenry with balloting education which is very important in the light of the unusually long ballot papers these elections will have.

## **RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING**

### **Ladies and Gentlemen**

- Our final and perhaps most vital area of preparations have been to recruit and train Electoral Staff to Administer Voting and Counting on Election Day.
- We have recruited and trained 12 000 Presiding Officers, Deputy Presiding Officers and Voters Roll Officers for deployment at the 2 771 voting stations on Election Day.
- This group will also form the core of the team of volunteers who will run the voting stations on election day – along with a further 31 000 additional support staff who are currently recruited and trained.
- The list of Presiding Officers and Deputy Presiding Officers will soon be submitted to political parties via the Municipal Party Liaison Committees for any objections or vetting, based on non-conformance with the agreed recruitment criteria.
- We are pleased to note that our recruitment continues to favour the youth, unemployed and women.

## **CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND MITIGATION**

- Since 2016 the Electoral Commission has been working with the European Centre for Electoral Support on a Project to Prevent, Mitigate and Manage Election-Related Conflict and Potential Violence.
- We have managed to train over 1000 individuals in leadership and conflict management in electoral processes. This is a vast and valuable network across South Africa who will be able to contribute to the prevention, mitigation and management of conflict at grassroots level.

## **OBSERVERS**

- Applications for accreditation as observers are currently being processed by the Commission. To date the Commission has accredited 35 institutions.

## **ENGAGEMENT WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS**

Ladies and gentlemen

The Commission is nearing the end of an intense process of engagement with key stakeholders. This has included meetings with:

- Leaders of Represented Political Parties
- Provincial Legislatures
- Government Departments and members of the Security Cluster
- Traditional Leaders
- Representatives of the disabled community

- The Agriculture Sector
- The Business Sector
- Labour Representatives
- Members of the diplomatic corps
- Civil society and Faith-Based Organisations
- And Members of the Media

These engagements will continue both formally and informally throughout the next few days right up to the announcement of results to ensure we work together to ensuring South Africa hosts yet another free and fair election.

## **LOAD-SHEDDING**

### **Distinguished Guests,**

Load-shedding is an acute concern for the Electoral Commission (IEC). The IEC has been interacting with Eskom, in order to anticipate the impact of load shedding on the elections process.

A key consideration in this regard is the availability of emergency lighting to support the voting and counting processes beyond dusk.

Together with the provincial department of COGTA, We are therefore exploring whatever contingency plans we can make to help protect the elections.

## **CONCLUSION**

Distinguished guests, as I Conclude

The Electoral Commission is on track with its preparations and will deliver elections on the 8th of May.

Now it is over to the political parties and candidates contesting these elections to take the baton and play their important part in encouraging participation by voters and ensuring we have successful, peaceful, tolerant, free, fair and credible elections.

In fact, it is paramount that our political leaders have a deep realization that the Electoral Code of Conduct is not a panacea to the creation of a climate conducive to free and fair election. Indeed, the Code of Conduct as a legal instrument has its place within a confluence of factors yet the Code of Conduct must be complimented with political rhetoric that fosters cross sectional behavior consistent with the values that underpin our constitution.

In this regard, we dare not fail! On behalf of the Electoral Commission we wish you all well.

I thank you

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