

**Closing address by the Limpopo MEC for Public Works Roads and Infrastructure, Azwinndini, Dingaan, Jeremiah during the strategic planning session held in Bela Bela on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> July 2014.**

**Acting Head of Department in absentia**

**General Managers and senior managers of the department**

**Officials from the Office of the Premier**

**Officials from the provincial Treasury**

**Officials from Public Service Commission**

**Officials from RAL**

**Entire staff members**

**Ladies and gentlemen**

When I left this podium yesterday and listened to the presentations by different stakeholders, I could get the feeling that we are the department that has its hands full to move from our current position to where we want to see ourselves.

Presentation by the auditing firm PWC and that of the Public Service Commission leaves much to be desired, and as the management of this department we have to pause, take stock and start to put our shoulder to the wheel and steer this department out of the doldrums it finds itself in.

But I was pleased that in the commissions yesterday, all these minds that are gathered here met and contested the space, all in the name of moving this department to new heights.

We are faced with many challenges that I do not think that other departments in the province are faced with. The Chief Financial Officer

said in his presentation that there is growing trend in the department of shifting funds few months into the financial year.

The CFO also raised the issue of accruals which started way back in the 2011/12 financial year to 2013/14 financial year. All these does not augur well for us because it leads to irregular, wasteful and fruitless expenditure. I don't think we want to find ourselves in this situation going forward.

Mistakes by the Bid Adjudication Committee and the Bid Evaluation Committee were raised and we have to worry because any wrong doing by these committees can plunge our department into financial misconduct.

Failure by the department to pay suppliers within 30 days takes us back and delays our mission of growing small businesses, which are very central to economic development of our province.

We have to take very serious care of our assets. The fact that our asset register and the assets themselves do not match is worrisome. We have to move with speed to finalise the electronic asset verification system. Serious attention must also be given to the reconciliation of the municipal accounts, as well as putting lease agreements in place and conducting the tenant audit. Once again I want to reiterate that we cannot have people, especially government employees staying in state house for free while government gives them housing subsidies.

We hope this will be dealt effectively through PWC who have been appointed to render audit of all houses that fall under the department. We welcome this intervention and await the report, which will give us a clear direction on which actions to take, especially government employees. We will show no mercy against them.

As the custodian of EPWP we must be worried that we are not doing well in the creation of employment in this regard. According to reports yesterday we are decreasing as the department in terms of creating EPWP jobs. Most worrying is that people with disabilities are the least beneficiaries. In the coming five years we must ensure that we reverse this trend and become the employer of choice as far as EPWP job creation is concerned.

The most saddening thing about our department is the returning of funds to the National Fiscus while millions of our people are still trapped in the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment. This has to stop as soon as we reach our offices.

It is not all doom and gloom colleagues. There are some positive things that the department is doing and we must build on these to become best of the best. The department's website and the annual reports are accessible to the public. All these excellent performances deserve mention because they raise our communication levels with the communities. But we can still do more.

PWC reported that the department is succeeding in creating a credible asset register.

We welcome the commitment by the Public Service Commission that they will come to our department and have a focus group with our SMS, and share ideas on how to tackle the challenges the department is faced with.

As I conclude, we have to be the department of choice. We can only achieve this if we work as a collective to steer this department towards realising its vision by ensuring that day to day management is aligned to our organisational goals. We have to be innovative in everything that we

do for us to return this department to what it used to be. Let us all rally behind "ACTION CLEAN AUDIT". It is possible.

Thank you