



SALGA COMMUNICATIONS FORUM- DURBAN WELCOME
ADDRESS BY CLLR F PEER, DEPUTY MAYOR
25 March 2017
Durban ICC

Programme Director,
SALGA NEC Members present,
CEO of SALGA – Mr Xolile George
Government officials,
Councillors,
Communicators,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of Mayor Zandile Gumede, also the deputy President of SALGA and welcome all of you to this important forum. Communication is one of the most important things in local government and that needs to be strengthened in order to keep our citizens updated. Communications also means, how we receive messages whether they are active or passive from our citizen. It is about ensuring continuous dialogue between politicians and voters, government and citizens.

Most communications department manage are the first point of contact between residents and their local council. With social media cementing itself as a quick and easy way to get in touch or stay up to date, most authorities now have a Twitter account or a presence on Facebook, while others also have Twitter and are branching out onto other platforms. We have also a WhatsApp which is used by water for reporting faults and leaks, including other things. This app has been

doing wonders and last week we won a Premier award. We hope you will learn from this important tool we are using.

Programme Director,

Communications to us isn't just about social media, communications it is the mouthpiece through which local government can shout about achievements, ask for feedback, warn residents and much more. We have been lacking at communicating our achievements and have been very timid in speaking against propaganda. Communicators must not be afraid to defend our government, sometimes it is worse when you see some of you attacking the very government you work for on social media. When people speak about our shortcomings as government and its leaders, you must be bold enough to speak about our achievement. Even if they say you sing for your supper, tell them you are a good singer that why you are in communications.

This is an important National Communicators Forum which is a correct platform for Municipal Communicators to engage on progress in Local Government performance and facilitate inter-municipal peer-learning. It is envisaged that this Forum will enable and support municipal communicators in their important role to inform and educate citizens and provide a platform for sharing of municipal innovations and good practices that will inform improvements in the sector.

Programme Director,

We must use this platform to improve and also tell SALGA what should be the role of Councillors in the communication of municipality. How is our private and political conduct affecting your work as communicators.

You must develop a manual that will assist councillors in communications because being a councillor is not a porch job. We get criticise and blamed for everything, some of the things we don't event have mandate on due to our categorisation of government.

With those few words, I welcome you and wish you fruitful deliberations. Have a wonderful stay and do enjoy the city because we have lot more to offer. Durban July is still on and yes, we are still on Summer Season all year. Go out to the beach this winter and enjoy Durban sun in winter. Tweet and Facebook about this wonderful place. Tell your friends about beauty around - remember that communicators are good story tellers. Welcome to Durban.