

**SPEECH BY FREE STATE MEC FOR SPORT, ARTS, CULTURE AND RECREATION, MR DAN KGOHULE, ON THE OCCASION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENT AUDITORS (SAIGA) AWARDS, BLOEMFONTEIN**

11 September 2009

Programme director  
Mayors and councillors present  
Professor Dieter Gloeck, Executive President of SAIGA  
Professor Herman de Jager, Secretary of SAIGA  
Mr TJ Kambule, Head of the Department  
Me Rachel Sempe, former Head of the Department  
Representatives of arts and culture councils as well as sport federations  
Members of the media  
Ladies and gentlemen  
Comrades

On 31 October 2008 a ceremony of this nature was hosted for the presentation of this very same award to this department. It is almost a year since that ceremony took place. This department is therefore being awarded the Southern Africa Institute of Government Auditor's award two years in succession. This is a sterling performance which deserves applause.

The fact that the award is for best performance both at provincial and national level further speaks volumes about the good work that has been done by the department in putting together an annual report that is reflective of the work being done in the department.

Programme director, I am told that when the award was presented to the department last year in October the mood prevailing amongst those who attended that ceremony was that there cannot be any backtracking. The mood, I am told, was that of forward ever backward never. The then Executive Manager for Sport and Recreation, Mr TJ Kambule, who is now the Head of the Department, reportedly challenged his colleagues never to lower the standard but to rise to the occasion and keep the standard or escalate it to greater levels. It will look to me that the department has done exactly that.

This second successive South African Institute of Government Auditors (SAIGA) Awards is a testimony to the response by the department to the clarion call made by Mr Kambule last year almost around this time. From my point of view I want to emphasise that good performance is an outcome of both individual and collective contributions, efforts and wisdom. In acknowledging individuals for the good work that has brought us good outcomes we should and we indeed are also acknowledging the collective.

Let me therefore take this opportunity to acknowledge Me Rachel Sempe who was the Accounting Officer under whose administrative stewardship the department registered these two successive victories. It is under her administrative leadership that the department crafted those two annual reports that performed so well at both provincial and national levels for two successive years. We must certainly give Me Sempe applause for her role in this regard.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have pointed out on some platforms and particularly so recently at the departmental strategic plan that we have a Chief Financial Officer in this department, Mr Kobus Kellerman, who is so talented and skilled. Undoubtedly, this second SAIGA award to the department is also a reflection of his astuteness and prolific nature when it comes to matters of finance and financial reporting.

It is still my considered view that this astuteness and prolific nature of his can be expanded further to benefit the province in general and the department particularly. I want to reiterate that in acknowledging the contribution of individuals we should also acknowledge the role of the collective. All this good work would not have been possible without a team of foot soldiers who are the personnel within the finance directorate who had to consolidate inputs and monitor financial processes as well as personnel and managers generally across the department who had to painstakingly ensure that those inputs are submitted and that they are of quality nature. Had that not been the case I have no doubt about the fact that we would not be where we are now.

We must therefore give a round of applause to this kind of commitment and relentlessness. It is appropriate that we also acknowledge our external partners and stakeholders without whose support and participation in our programmes we would not have anything to report about. The nature of our work as the Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation is such that without the participation of communities, stakeholders and individuals we would not be worth our salt. It is for this reason that we took a conscious decision to invite sport federations as well as arts and culture statutory bodies to this ceremony.

It is important that we celebrate this victory of good performance with them as they are party to what we do as the department. In the same vein we recognise the role of municipalities, whom we have also invited to this event. Councillors responsible for sport, arts, culture and recreation have to work hand in glove with us to ensure that this function touches each and every citizen of this province. It is through these and other varied partnerships that we can be able to sustain good performance that would finally be recognised through such awards as the SAIGA awards.

The political direction provided by an executive authority is critical in giving direction to the departments in the process of implementation of government mandates. Executing authorities exercise an important oversight on behalf of government within departments. In the final analysis it is the executing authority that has to sign off the annual report to be submitted in the legislature. A bad annual report will therefore be a bad reflection on that authority. But a good annual report should equally be a good reflection on that authority.

It is therefore befitting that I pay tribute to my predecessors in this department who had to exercise political oversight during the processes of the crafting of the annual reports that have won the SAIGA awards during the last two financial years.

Honoured guests, I am sure we are all aware of the process that our provincial government has embarked upon to engage consultants in the organisational reengineering of government departments. Although the process is not yet complete there is already a sense of the new strategic direction that we should be taking as government.

The enabling role that we need to be playing as a province in the service delivery continuum is at the centre of this new strategic orientation. Even our reporting standards might have to be altered in line with the new vision and mission that shall have been adopted in line with the new strategic direction. I do not want to pre-empt the outcomes of this process and we thus await the final outcome and communicate appropriately.

Programme director, ladies and gentlemen, comrades; let me conclude with the words of my predecessor, MEC Mamiki Qabathe, when she accepted this award last year. "To win an award of this magnitude is no mean task and therefore this achievement must never be underestimated. To be the winner in the category for all provincial departments in the Free State and to also achieve the highest overall score of all state departments in the country thereby rendering us the overall winner for the annual Public Sector Reporting Awards, is indeed something worth an applause".

These words of my colleague ring true as much as they did a year ago. Let the good work continue.

I thank you.