

PARADIGM SHIFT NEEDED TO SUSTAIN DEVELOPMENT, SAYS MAMPHELE



At the MIDI Summit were from left to right: Babu Baijoo (MIDI/Capital Media Group) Rob Haswell (Msunduzi Municipal Manager) Dr Mamphele Ramphela, Mervyn Dirks (Deputy Mayor), Ina Cronje (MEC for Finance), Madeleine Jackson-Plaatjies (MIDI/Msunduzi).

In order to move away from apartheid type of exclusive cities to more inclusive and integrated cities, there is a need to embark on a paradigm shift from walking apart to walking together with a common goal. So said Ramphela Mamphele during the Msunduzi Innovation and Development Institute (MIDI) summit held at the Golden Horse Hotel recently.

Mamphele said it is a fantastic initiative for both business and academia to commit themselves to work together in the long-term developmental vision of the city.

She said for the past fifteen years the country has achieved many things such as striving for the establishment of a non-sexist and non-racial society as well as for the establishment of an egalitarian society. She said all these achievements reflect the new democratic dispensation characterised by the plurality of political parties.

According to Mamphele, while the country has achieved a lot in the past fifteen years, the

main challenges that still need to be addressed include education, health, unemployment and safety and security.

She said it was unacceptable that the country still has a high unemployment rate while at the same time there are a number of vacancies in key areas.

"This is one of the reasons for the outbreak of xenophobia that the country experienced recently," said Mamphele.

According to Mamphele, 50% of unemployed people are between the ages of 20 to 24 who are not at school and not in training. She said one of the factors that contributed to the lack of much-needed skills today, particularly in education, was the closing down of teacher training colleges.

The outspoken academic said that in order for the government to make a positive and lasting success in the lives of the people as far as development and sustainability are concerned, the government must abandon the provision of grants as this creates

utter dependency on the government.

"The critical path that the government has taken to deliver

social grants is not sustainable but the government needs to develop programmes that will ensure some kind of economic

activity and engagement rather than creating perpetual dependency on social grants," concluded Mamphele.

DELEGATES DISCUSS LONG TERM DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR CITY OF CHOICE

Members of the business fraternity, academics and government officials gathered at the Golden Horse Hotel recently for a two-day strategic summit focusing on the long term plans for the city of Pietermaritzburg.

The summit was organised by the Msunduzi Innovation and Development Institute (MIDI) in partnership with various other stakeholders such as FNB, Public Eye, The Witness, Edendale Eyethu, Hulamini, the City of Choice and the Department of Economic Development and Tourism.

The aim of the summit was to embark on critical catalyst projects that will provide developmental programmes for

both the Msunduzi and Umgungundlovu Municipal Districts. Delegates were urged to identify critical issues that will take Pietermaritzburg forward during the next 20 years.

The summit is viewed as a vehicle to realise the vision and the development dreams of the city through active engagement and participation by different stakeholders.

According to the organisers, the summit was not just another talk show, but a critical turning point on the issue of the strategic and integrated development of the city.

Msunduzi Municipality Deputy Mayor, Mervyn Dirks, said the summit was a historic event

in the city of Pietermaritzburg in the sense that various delegates representing the business fraternity, academics, government and city officials had converged to discuss the status quo and where they want the city to be in 2020 in terms of development.

Dirks said it is important that when the developmental goals of the city are discussed, it is imperative to bear in mind the national and provincial programmes that are in place in order to avoid duplicating the programmes.

Speaking about food security, the Deputy Mayor said the summit was an appropriate platform to find ways of making the food security programme a success in the city.

"The city and the Umgungundlovu district have vast lands which are suitable for agricultural development and we encourage the one-home, one-garden approach," said Dirks.

"With the one-home, one-garden approach, the surplus can significantly contribute to our local market," he said.

According to Dirks, another point of critical concern is the revitalisation of the city. He said it is now time to work together to revitalise the city and make it attractive to investors and developers.

He said while some great achievements have been made as far as the development of the city is concerned, the issue of

the development of Edendale corridor still has to be realised.

Meanwhile, MEC for Finance, Ina Cronje, also admitted that there is an urgent need for the development of key infrastructures in the city, for example, the airport.

Cronje said it is problematic that aeroplanes cannot often land during the summer months because of poor weather conditions.

"Either Pietermaritzburg must live with the consequences of losing business opportunities or develop a better regional airport with a longer landing strip that can handle bigger aircraft," she said.