

Keynote Address by the MEC for Finance - Gauteng

3rd National MFMA Annual Financial Statements Consistency Workshop

Programme Director,
The Accountant-General,
Representatives of National Treasury,
The Auditor-General of South Africa,
The Accounting Standards Board,
The Commissioner of the South African Revenue Service,
Leaders from Provincial Treasuries,
Municipal Mayors,
Municipal Managers,
Chief Financial Officers,
Representatives of our professional bodies,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Good morning.

It is both an honour and a privilege to join you today at the Third National MFMA Annual Financial Statements Consistency Workshop.

Allow me to begin by congratulating the Office of the Accountant-General, National Treasury, the Western Cape Provincial Treasury, the Gauteng Provincial Treasury, SAICA, Cigfaro and every stakeholder who has contributed to making this workshop a success.

The fact that this workshop has reached its third national gathering tells us something important. It tells us that South Africa is committed to continuously improving public financial management.

Good governance is not achieved through legislation alone. It is built through partnerships, through learning, through professional development and through a willingness to continuously improve. This workshop reflects exactly that commitment.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The people of South Africa do not experience government through policies or accounting standards.

They experience government through clean streets, reliable water, functioning clinics, safe communities and quality public services.

Behind every one of those services is a financial decision.

Behind every infrastructure project is a procurement process.

Behind every successful municipality is sound financial management.

That is why finance matters.

Financial management is not simply about balancing budgets.

It is about creating the conditions for service delivery.

It is about ensuring that every rand collected from taxpayers delivers the maximum possible value for our communities.

As government, we have both a constitutional and a moral responsibility to ensure that public resources are managed with integrity, transparency and accountability.

These principles are not optional.

They are fundamental to maintaining public trust.

Citizens rightly expect government to demonstrate that public money is spent wisely, reported honestly and safeguarded against waste, fraud and corruption.

Every financial statement prepared by a municipality is therefore much more than an accounting document.

It is a statement of public accountability.

It demonstrates whether government has exercised proper stewardship over the resources entrusted to it.

Ladies and gentlemen,

One of the greatest strengths of South Africa's public finance system is that it is continually evolving.

Through the leadership of National Treasury and the Accounting Standards Board, our financial reporting framework continues to improve year after year.

This commitment to continuous improvement ensures that South Africa remains aligned with international best practice while responding to the realities of our own public sector.
We should never become comfortable with simply maintaining the status quo.

As our economy changes, as technology advances and as public expectations increase, government must continue to improve the way it manages public finances.
Continuous improvement is not a criticism of where we are.
It is recognition that excellence is a journey rather than a destination.

Professionalism is another essential pillar of that journey.
Government's greatest asset is not its buildings or its systems.
It is its people.
Competent, ethical and committed public servants remain the foundation of capable institutions.

As provinces and municipalities continue to face increasingly complex financial environments, we need professionals who are equipped not only with technical expertise but also with integrity, sound judgement and an unwavering commitment to serving the public interest.
That is why initiatives aimed at professionalising the public sector remain so important.
They strengthen institutions.
They build confidence.
And they improve governance.

Colleagues,
We often speak about accountability as though it belongs to one institution.
The reality is very different.
Accountability is a shared responsibility.

National Treasury provides leadership.
Provincial Treasuries provide support and oversight.
The Auditor-General provides independent assurance.
The Accounting Standards Board develops high-quality standards.
Municipal councils exercise oversight.

Finance professionals prepare credible information.

Professional bodies develop skills and ethics.

Each institution has its own role.

Together, they form a system that protects public resources and strengthens democracy.

None of us succeeds alone.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As government, we also recognise the importance of strengthening compliance across every aspect of public administration.

We welcome the participation of the South African Revenue Service in this workshop and acknowledge the leadership of the Commissioner in building a culture of compliance.

Strong tax compliance contributes to fiscal sustainability and strengthens the state's ability to deliver services.

Equally, sound financial reporting supports transparency and informed decision-making.

Both are essential components of good governance.

Finally, I want to leave you with one thought.

Public finance is not an end in itself.

It is an enabler.

The budgets we approve, the financial statements we prepare, the audits we complete and the controls we strengthen all serve one purpose.

They exist to improve the quality of life of the people of South Africa.

Every reconciliation completed.

Every asset correctly recorded.

Every disclosure properly prepared.

Every irregularity prevented.

Every recommendation implemented.

Each of these contributes to stronger institutions and ultimately to better service delivery.

That is why your work matters.

That is why this workshop matters.

And that is why government will continue supporting initiatives that strengthen capability, accountability and professionalism across our public institutions.

I encourage all delegates to use these two days to learn from one another, to share practical solutions and to continue building the relationships that make our public finance system stronger. Together, we can continue building municipalities that are financially sustainable, professionally managed and fully accountable to the communities they serve.

I wish you every success for the discussions ahead.

Thank you.