National Conference on Local Government Communication

“COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT AND BETTER SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE AGE OF HOPE”

City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality, Sammy Marks Conference Centre
8 – 10 May 2006

FIRST DRAFT REPORT
1. Objectives:

The conference aimed at ensuring that local government communication is able to deal with both the realities and perceptions about service delivery and successes at local government sphere in an ever more meaningful way over the next 5 years, with the following objectives:

- To develop a five-year communication plan for local government based on the five-year strategic plan for local government.
- To develop systems aimed at strengthening the communication infrastructure and functions of ward committees.
- To adopt guidelines for local government communication.
- Accelerate communication interventions in support of service delivery initiatives.
- Share knowledge and understanding between government communicators about systems and policies developed since the first national conference in June 2002.

2. Strategic input from Speakers:

The following invited speakers to the conference, presented on a number of issues, priorities and concerns with regards to local government communications. Their strategic input to the conference was recognized throughout the deliberations as guidance.

- Executive Mayor to the City of Tshwane Cllr Gwen Ramokgopa
- SALGA Representative, Executive Mayor Cllr Duma Nkosi
- Deputy Minister of DPLG, Ms Nomatyala Hangana
- Minister in the Presidency, Dr E.G Pahad
- GCIS CEO, Mr Joel Netitshenze
3. COMMISSION 1
The commission looked at the sustained communication in the next five years. The deliberations were based on the five year strategic plan for local government as articulated by DPLG.

PRIORITY ISSUES:

Promoting ASGISA (half poverty and growth economy)
The strategy notes that, central to the role of municipalities there is a need to promote Local Economic Development which would help achieve development targets set for government.
The following communication implications were identified:
- Communications to improve market and public confidence in municipalities
- Promote the role of local economies
- Fostering of partnerships (with communities & economic role players) that would enable growth
- Conducting a mass campaign on economic opportunities available
- Promoting ASGI-SA and meaningful community participation.

Service Delivery & Development
In terms of service delivery and development, the strategy has set out targets to address the backlogs in service delivery, and the communication implications thereof include:
- Communication of achievements and plans for the next 5 years – indicate benchmarks
- The use of communication as a tool for monitoring and feedback of service delivery and development.
- Fostering accountability and transparency through communication – developing plans for information dissemination.
- Deepening the idea of communication as a strategic and integral component of policy and programme delivery amongst municipalities.
- Establishing and strengthening communication Structures and Systems within municipalities
- Institutionalizing communication in municipalities by ensuring that communicators are placed at decision-making levels

Meaningful community participation
In terms of strengthening meaningful participation, identified communication interventions relate to:
- Strengthening of wards – Administrative support and provision of information in an easy and digestible fashion
Promoting Intergovernmental Relations

To be able to meet the communication needs of the strategic plan, the commission noted that promoting intergovernmental relations in terms of communications must be prioritized:

- Reflecting concrete interventions that would need to be made from other spheres of government
- Skills development, capacity building for local government communicators and political principals – deploying of hands-on technical capacity to municipalities
- Alignment with other spheres of government through an established communication cycle
- Regulating relationship between municipal communicators and those of other spheres of government
- Developing communication protocols and communication channels
- Building a corporate Image for local government

4. RECOMMENDED COMMUNICATION INTERVENTIONS

The concept/models of development communication as supported by the local government legislation and our democratic principles must be intensified, as to increase platforms for community participation, transparency and ownership of service delivery initiatives. Communicators be trained on the models.

In line with establishing a Government Communication Systems SALGA should drive the advocacy and mobilize the active participation of political principals in municipalities to adopt communications as a core to service delivery, participation in communication forums, etc. Whereas, GCIS should conduct a country wide campaign to municipalities on the importance of communications.
In acknowledging that communication is the overall responsibility of the mayor, it is recommended that political champions from the mayoral committee be appointed for the communication portfolio to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of processes pertaining to communications.

In strengthening the Communication Structures DPLG, GCIS and SALGA should provide adequate support structures for the established communication forums i.e PCF and DCFs for them to have sufficient capacity to intervene and strengthen municipal communications.

Training of municipal communicators as well as political principals (in particular ward councillors) on communications must be prioritized.

Through the Provincial Communication Forum, GCIS, DPLG and SALGA must spearhead collective communication interventions in municipalities where severe capacity constraints exist. Secondments and twinning arrangements must be established.

The national fund dedicated solely for driving local government communication must be established – to provide hands on support to municipalities experiencing infrastructural difficulties financially and technically.

Whereas, GCIS should conduct a country wide campaign to municipalities on the importance of communications.

SALGA must facilitate establishment of partnerships with institutions of higher learning for training of communicators and political principals.
5. COMMISSION 2

WARD COMMITTEES – THE EARS, EYES AND MOUTHS OF THE COMMUNITY

The commission deliberated on the issue of providing communication support for ward committees as major players in enhancing communities with the communities we serve and that ward committees are in a better position to disseminate and champion municipal communications.

PRIORITY ISSUES:

Strengthening communication infrastructure in support of ward committees
The commission notes that most municipalities do not have established local communication forums in which ward councilors would be represented and be part of the overall communication activities, thus the need to strengthen communication infrastructure in support of ward committees.

Integration of Ward Committees into Communication Strategies
It was noted that in many instances ward committees are not part of municipal communication strategies, yet they are crucial in establishing the communication and information needs of the communities through convening of regular community meetings as legislated. On the other hand, the commission noted that there is knowledge gap amongst the communicators on the composition, policy, role and function of the ward committees and that there is a need to workshop them on these functions.

6. RECOMMENDED COMMUNICATION INTERVENTIONS

- Workshops for communicators to inform them of WC composition, policy, role and function
- Establishment of operational Local Communication Forums with representation of ward committees.
- Ward Committees should always be part and parcel of the municipal Communication Strategy;
- That there should be a consultation process with WCs to establish communication/info needs of the community.
- Municipalities should ensure that ward committees are consistently provided with communication material
- Local municipalities should build up a profile of each ward/database and develop communications strategy based on such research.
• Ward Councillors, with ward committees, to convene regular community meetings as legislated to align with municipality’s annual IDP and budget process
• Reasonable resources and support to be given to ward committees. There should be a dedicated budget
• There should be skills development programs and training of ward committee members on communication issues and a policy should be developed for uniform training of ward committees in line with initiatives of DPLG.
• Communications Units should provide communication tools and resources for ward committees to conduct communications work.
• Communications Units should have regular briefings with WCs on government programmes and projects.
• Municipalities must conduct an induction programme for ward committees to understand the environment they will operate in; understand the municipality’s Vision and Strategy, the IDP process and key strategies.
• Ward Committees to inform government on the impact of its delivery programme through the Local Communication Forums and the District Communication Forums.
• WC term of office should be linked to Municipal term of office to ensure a consistent application of a five-year communication plan that includes ward committees
• Municipalities should ensure compliance and synergy with the legislated channels of communication between the (Exec) Mayor’s office and the Speaker’s Office through meetings to coordinate communication programmes as this relates to community participation eg. diary committee, IDP programmes, Council Open Day, channeling info from DCFs to Speaker’s forum etc
• CDW programme is harmonized and synergized with the ward committee system/programme
• Office of the Speaker to provide administrative support to Ward Committees
• Problems with the current dual reporting lines of CDWs to municipalities and provincial local government departments must be resolved as they are hampering the successful implementation of a communications programme
• The implementation of the national plan with regards to the MPCCs must be accelerated. Each local municipality to establish an MPCC by 2014 as per national government targets. These MPCC services should be accessible to ward committees.
### 7. COMMISSION 3

**DRAFT GUIDELINES FOR MUNICIPAL COMMUNICATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIC ACTIVITY</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK</td>
<td>Various legislations give credence to the existence and functioning of local government COMMUNICATIONS</td>
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<td>The ff are key:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1. Constitution</td>
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<td>3. Municipal Structures ACT</td>
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<td>5. The Comtask report</td>
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<td>6. MFMA</td>
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<td>7. IGR ACT</td>
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<td>8. PFMA</td>
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| 9. Local government Act  
10. MDDA |
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<tr>
<td>If guidelines are approved, the Structures Act will have to be amended to include communications.</td>
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### INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS
- Communications is located in the Office of the Mayor and report administratively to the MM.
- HoC to sit in management & strategic meetings

### FORUMS
All communication forums are strategic meetings of government communicators.
- The communications forums have to be aligned with the political IGR structures.
- The communications forums are knowledge sharing consultative structures and not decision making.
- The HOC in province should sit in PIF (PCC) and ensure that there is an Agenda item for communications for reporting on communications developments.
- The HOC has to devise a mechanism to report back to the PCF on the outcomes of PCC meetings as relating to communications and other matters.

The chairs of Communication Forums should invite any stakeholder to the forums (PCF, DCF, LCF, and MCF).

### COMMUNICATION CYCLE
- The communication cycle of municipalities begin in February after the SONA and the SOPA and ends in February of the following year.
- The implementation of the communications strategy begins in July and ends the end of June.

The core teams in Provinces will assist municipalities to understand the cycles and
GCIS could be requested to assist as required.
Refer to attached communication cycle for municipalities in the file (The structure will be reviewed to include some suggestions).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMMUNICATION STRATEGISING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Guidelines for drafting communication strategies as agreed with the proposal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communicators in municipalities should begin to develop their communication strategies based on the guidelines.</td>
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The core teams in Provinces will assist municipalities that have challenges with their strategies and GCIS could be requested to assist as required.

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<tr>
<th>Communications Policy</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Framework in the guidelines noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• All municipalities should begin drafting their communications policies aligned to the provincial communication policy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• In case where the province does not have a policy, the municipality can continue with its policy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The communications policy should be approved by Council</td>
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<tr>
<th>COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community participation is a communication activity, and communicators should play a strategic role in this regard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communicators should popularize and promote Community participation programme as they interact with all stakeholders and role players for the success of the programme.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Communications should be involved in all the three stages of public participation (PRE, DURING AND POST).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Communicators should be made aware of the CDW brief for them to understand the rest of the communication environment.</td>
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<tr>
<th>CAPACITY BUILDING</th>
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<tr>
<td>• All municipalities’ should ensure that they make provision for ensuring that</td>
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there is a training budget for communicators.
• Need to use SITA levies and the MIG allocations for training.
• CDWs and Ward Committee members should be trained on basic communication skills.
• Other officials in the Municipality could be identified for training in communications (Depending on the availability of the budget and over all communications objectives of such municipalities).

It is important to note that Training is an ongoing process, it never stops.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Communication Structures</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Communication structures as proposed in the guidelines were accepted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The structure should be phased in and not to be implemented as it is (This will depend on the availability of resources).</td>
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<tr>
<th>FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immediate Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All municipalities should begin a process of appointing communicators (Capacity for communications).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Core teams to continue to assist municipalities in need of capacity and some officials in the municipality could be trained to carry communications responsibilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Budget has to be set aside for communications (Capacity Building and communications activities).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• To ensure that the DCF, LCF and MCF are fully operational and those that do not have the forums should move towards their establishment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• All projects and programmes of the municipality must include communications planning at inception (Ward committees, CDWs and other committees and structures in the municipality).</td>
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<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Budget constraints</td>
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<td>• Non buy in of political principal</td>
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<td>• Communication is not taken as key management activity for service delivery.</td>
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In some municipalities communications is placed wrongly (e.g., under HR, IT, SPU etc.).

8. WAY FORWARD
DRAFT GUIDELINES
MUNICIPAL COMMUNICATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>REMARKS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once the resolutions have been approved the process will be as follows:</td>
<td>SALGA</td>
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<tr>
<td>• SALGA will take the resolutions through their structures to get approval and endorsement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• After the conference the resolutions should be submitted to GCIS Secretariat for approval.</td>
<td>DPLG/GCIS</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Once approved, the Ministers DPLG and Presidency to be requested to take the resolutions through the Cabinet Process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Once approved by Cabinet, the resolutions should become compulsory for implementation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The resolutions should be presented to provincial MECs through MINMEC.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Resolutions should be presented to MUNIMEC.</td>
<td>PROVINCES</td>
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<tr>
<td>• MECs should take the resolutions to the provincial cabinet for approval.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provincial core teams should continue to work with municipalities with capacity challenges.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The Province should ensure that the PCF is fully operational and that the</td>
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necessary interventions are made to ensure that DCFs, MCFs and LCFs are fully functional.

- Municipalities should ensure implementation of the endorsed resolutions.  
  All municipalities should ensure that communication structures are established.  
  **Municipalities**

### IMPLICATION OF APPROVED GUIDELINES

- Once approved, the tripartite committee should present the resolutions to mayors/municipalities.  
  **SALGA**

- Amend the necessary legislations to accommodate the resolutions of this conference (Systems structures Act)  
  - Develop a generic comms policy  
  **DPLG**

- GCIS to continue working with DPLG and SALGA on the system.  
  - A capacity to be created in GCIS to help harness the system and work with local government communications.  
  - Integrate and coordinate government communication programmes.  
  **GCIS**

- Provincial Core Teams to monitor implementation of the resolutions.  
  **OTP**
9. COMMISSION 4

Immediate Interventions to accelerate communication for local government.

The commission deliberated on the immediate interventions to accelerate local government communication.

PRIORITY ISSUES:

- Repositioning the democratic local government
- Ensuring access to information:
  - How local government works
  - How to access services
  - Optimal use of MPCCs
- The need to promote social participation and access to information
- Two way communication between government and the people should be a permanent style of government
- The need to ensure local, provincial and national government speak with one voice and improve cooperation and synergies in improving the lives of the people
- Forums and channels for communication.
- Institutionalizing the communications function

10. RECOMMENDED COMMUNICATION INTERVENTIONS

10.1 Institutionalizing Communication

- Local government should have skilled competent and professional government communicators
- Communication should be integrated at a strategic level in decision- and policy making structures
- There should be synergies and coordination between the Speakers’ Offices and the mayors’ offices in relation to community outreach, roadshows and ward committee campaigns.
- Strategic communication issues including current affairs discussions should be permanent agenda items on all IGR and Executive structures including:
  - President’s Coordinating Council (PCC), Minmecs, Premier’s Coordinating Forum, Mayors Committees, Executive Councils, ward committees etc.
• A programme should be developed and implemented to capacitate and improve the understanding and appreciation of the strategic importance of communications among all internal role-players in communications including mayors, mayoral committees, councillors and senior managers. This should include the local government communication guidelines and resolutions of the national conference on local government communications. Key activities to include:
  o A roadshow by the provincial core teams
  o Training etc.
• All mayoral committee reports/ submissions should include communication implications, including communication strategies.
• In prioritizing communication, all municipalities should have:
  o A designated head of communication and communication component
  o Sufficient budget for communication work and activities
• Municipal communication components should have a dynamic and interactive relationship with councilors on key communication matters, including:
  o Public participation
  o Current affairs issues
  o Emerging communication risks
  o Information and advice on speeches, media liaison and messaging
• District and local municipalities should coordinate and explore shared strategies and communication services.

10.2 Strategizing to communicate, immediate action

• Communication strategy
  o Each municipality needs to develop and adopt a communication strategy and programme by January 2007 and annually. This should be aligned to the national and provincial communication strategies.
  o GCIS/SALGA/DPLG to disseminate communication strategy template to all municipalities with immediate effect (by end of May 2006)
  o Training on the development of communication strategy to be organized by provincial core teams by July 2006
  o As part of the development of the communication strategy, research to analyse the communication environment should be undertaken. This can include:
    ▪ Mini surveys
    ▪ A questionnaire sent out with water and lights accounts
    ▪ Questionnaires distributed through ward committees
  o The key messages and content of the communication strategy should include:
    ▪ A focus on achievements and progress
- Plans in addressing challenges
- Internal communication strategy
- Importance of cooperative governance and synergy between the three spheres of government in improving conditions at local level
- That partnership between government and all sectors is required in addressing development challenges and service delivery issues
- The need to promote community pride and ownership of community facilities
  - Each municipality and district should develop and regularly update a calendar of public activities which outlined key communication opportunities drawn from the communication strategy and programme
  - The strategy should include indicators drawn from perception audits or studies as well as monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, to benchmark performance and whose progress can be tracked on an annual or biannual basis

- Communication and media policy
  - Each municipality should develop and approve a communication and media policy which outlines among others, media protocols, roles and responsibilities, authorization for media statement, who is authorized to speak to the media etc.

- Systems for better communication
  - Media monitoring and analysis to detect coverage of the municipality and ensure timeous and appropriate responses
  - Communication calendar: a regular calendar of public activities should be developed and communicated to internally and to external stakeholders, including the media
  - Media relations: a programme to build media relations, common understanding and agreements and improve media coverage should be developed and implemented.
  - Media programme: a programme of media briefings etc. linked to the communication programme and development priorities of the municipality.

10.3 CAPACITY BUILDING
There is a need to improve the capacity, understanding and skills related to government communication at all levels of local government. Specific attention should be paid to:
- Training of mayors and mayoral committees on communication at local government level, handling the media and media and communications policy
- Training of councillors on communication and media policy
10.4 CAMPAIGNS AND COMMUNICATION PROGRAMME

10.4.1 Repositioning local government
- There is a need to reposition and rebrand local government across the country; this requires common messaging at a national, provincial and local level. The national messaging should be complemented by specific provincial and municipal programmes and messaging.
- It should be based on addressing the findings of the perception audit
- Among the key messages should be that:
  - The people have spoken
  - What local government will do to fulfill the mandate of the people
  - Profiling of local government leaders linked to the local government commitments.
- Among key characteristics which should become associated with the new repositioned local government (image and reputation) include:
  o Caring
  o Competent
  o Transparent
  o Knowledgeable
  o Honest and trustworthy
  o Accountable/localized and in touch with the people
  o Accessible and approachable
  o Committed
  o Instill pride
  o Fair and equitable
  o People-centred and customer focused/customer-driven

10.4.2 External campaigns
- Profiling of local government leaders
- Communication on local government five-year plan and IDPs
Link to provincial and national programmes
Development priorities
Governance issues: building local government capacity, progress and plans in implementing Project Consolidate
Infrastructure development
Economic development and job creation: AsgiSA, EPWP etc.
Social development
Service delivery

**Back to basics**
- Public education campaign on how local government works (A people’s guide to democratic local government)
- FAQs for each municipality
  - National information
  - Local information
- Handbook for councilors
- How to contact your representative:
  - Information for call centres
  - CDWs
  - Ward councilors
- Who to contact for what
  - Representatives
  - Municipal services
- Which ward are you in?
- Maps and faces of ward councilors
- Publicising code of ethics for councilors
- What is an IDP?

**Ward Committee campaign**
- Municipality to initiate Ward Committee process
- Community meetings to be held to elect new Ward Committees
- Introduction of new Ward Councillors
- Raise awareness of roles of Ward Councilors, Ward Committees and CDWs
- Publicize programme of ward committee meetings
- Regular ward committee meetings and community report-backs
- Distribute and publicize DPLG ward committee publications and other publicity tools
Common issues on ward committee agendas to include:
• Key council decisions
• Five-year plan/ IDPs
• Current affairs
• Local ward programme of action

**Basic services campaign**
• Indigent policy
• Access to free basic services
• That those who can afford have a responsibility to pay for services

**10.4.3 Communication calendar**

Among the key communication milestones and opportunities in the next 12 months are:
• Inauguration of mayors
• Budget speeches/ State of the City/Municipality address and roadshows/ Izimbizo to take message to communities
• IDP process
• Launch of ward committees and ward committees campaign
• January mid-term report
• Local growth and development summits
• National commemorative days e.g. June 16, National Womens Day etc.
• Local government week (public awareness week coordinated by Salga)
• Local democracy week (to showcase national, provincial and local government programmes at a local level)
• Imbizo Focus Week (April and October)
• Launch of MPCCs and MPCC open days
(See also page XX of conference file)

**10.4.4 Internal campaigns**

All municipalities should include an internal communication strategy aimed at public servants

**Batho Pele campaign**
• Changing internal culture of service delivery
• Service standards, ethics and values
• Customer care policy
10.5. KEY COMMUNICATION MECHANISMS AND ACTIVITIES

In addition to regular communication mechanisms, innovative mechanisms such as drama should be used to disseminate key messages to audiences such as youth.

Campaigns should utilize a variety of communication mechanisms including:

- Taking the message to communities through community meetings and
- Roadshows and community outreach programmes
- **Stakeholder management:** Ongoing interaction and consultation with stakeholders including with youth, women, business, traditional leaders, NGOs, CBOs, FBOs etc.
- Media liaison including with
  - community radio stations
  - community newspapers
  - one pager in local newspapers
- Information kiosks
- Effective utilization and partnerships for public display and high traffic areas
- Distribution mechanisms should be linked to engagement with communities including through door-to-door work and workshops.
- Councilors, CDWs, ward committee members, stakeholders etc. should be directly involved in door to door work and campaigns.
- Ward councilors should understand the principles of two-way communications so that they are able to be more responsive to community needs and provide regular feedback to communities
- Attention should be paid to community in the preferred language of local communities
- Workshops
- Call centres
- Websites
- Letters to the editor
- Newsletters
11. COMMISSION 5

ICT: INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

The commission looked at the role of ICT in improving service delivery.

PRIORITY ISSUES

- The role of ICT in improving service delivery;
- The parallel function of communication and ICT;
- ICT as a tool for communicating to the outside world and internal targets;
- The use of ICT in evaluating strategies and policies faster; enhancing and monitoring functions, i.e. media monitoring, website.
- The need to promote ICT as strategic function (how do we promote then the interaction between ICT and other roles) and demystifying ICT (perceptions)
- The obligation for municipalities to have: emails, websites, telephone & network, cellphone, internet and PC (writing).

11.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

- A national helpdesk should be established to coordinate establishment of websites, intranet research, evaluation and monitoring to ensure that municipalities fulfill their obligation of access to information and in terms of providing communication medium processes.
- Integrated planning is essential in the overall planning at municipalities.
- An audit must be conducted by DPLG regarding ICT challenges in municipalities and to identify areas for intervention.
- A skills development plan should be developed by national government and should embrace JIPSA programme.
- General knowledge road show (need for knowledge programme) should be conducted for all municipalities.
- All new councilors must be trained on ICT and a long term sustainable training program must be established (5 year plan)
- Municipalities should strive to employ content managers
- The communications unit should be responsible for web content.
- A framework for the development of ICT Strategy must be developed and used to guide municipalities.
- A framework for the development of domain and web standards must be developed.
- DPLG to rollout programme to capacitate senior managers and communicators in conjunction with SALGA
Integration of ICT and Communication Strategies should be prioritized.
Special focus on MPCC’s infrastructure must be developed.

12. THE TSHWANE DECLARATION

We, the Government communicators gathered at the conference themed “Communication for Development and Better Service Delivery in the Age of Hope” held in May 2006 at the City of Tshwane, hereby commit to a sustained communication programme over the next five years that advances the development agenda of government at local level. We commit to a partnership with the people that will include:

- Enhancing community participation, accountability and transparency through improved communication at local government level
- Strengthening local government communications structures and systems as a development tool
- Enhancing all service delivery programmes (such as ASGISA) through accelerated communications support