

**MAXIMUM PARTICIPATION OF IDP/BUDGET REPRESENTATIVE FORUM MEETINGS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED.**

Judy Ngoloyi

Picture taken by Lucky Makeleni



EAST LONDON: The outgoing Strategic Manager of Amathole District Municipality (ADM) Andile Fani said in order for an Integrated Development Plan ( IDP ) to succeed in any local government sphere, complying with the stipulated legislation is the name of the game. Fani said in a process of executing that responsibility ADM identified a structure known as IDP Representative Forum and that is where all relevant stakeholders are expected to make a meaningful contribution on the developmental agenda of the district.

This comes after an IDP/Budget Representative Forum Meeting held in East London at Osner Hotel on 26 May 2008. This meeting was the last Rep Forum before the IDP and Budget are tabled for approval at the Council meeting scheduled for 30 May 2008.

Commenting on the role played by the IDP process since its inception, Fani said the municipality has made some great strides but communities are not capacitated enough to challenge issues related on how the municipality is governed. “If that is not happening one would not get a positive impact of what is done by a municipality. Sometimes communities are effective because you would find a few people raising issues that are critical, but generally people are in the dark about the powers and functions of the institution. It is our responsibility as a district to build that kind of capacity,” said Fani.

He said: **“In a nutshell one can simply say though there’s an impact, sometimes it’s minimal but we must find a way of making sure people are skilled to understand the roles of local government.”**

During the last IDP Rep Forum the Executive Mayor of ADM, Sakhumzi Somyo, complained about the absence of sector departments in these kinds of meetings. Fani reiterated Somyo’s concern and stated that IDP is not only meant for ADM but it’s a realization of a developmental agenda which enhances government programmes. He also took this opportunity and congratulated certain provincial sector departments who have been consistent in attending meetings of this nature.

He said this is a serious matter and needs an urgent intervention. “There is a danger that the reflection of development in terms of the ADM’s IDP could perhaps not be a true reflection of what is taking place in the province. The participation and input of the Provincial Sector Department is therefore vital as their information feeds into the district’s IDP”, he said.

He said a political intervention and strengthening of intergovernmental relations might change the current picture that seems to be hampering the progress made thus far.

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“The projects of the sector departments need to be integrated with the ADM’s IDP, and therefore my view is that if those projects are not aligned there is a risk of them being rejected which would make the sector departments realize the seriousness of the situation,” said Fani.

He took this opportunity to wish whoever is to take over his position everything of the best. He stated that his time at the ADM had not been a walk in the park – things had been tough but at the end of the day obstacles had been overcome. He said: “Sometimes you find yourself having to attend to so many different issues – it is difficult to maintain a balance between one’s work and social life – there are friends, family and the institution which need attention”.

Asked if he is happy with the road he had traveled since he occupied this office in 2005 Fani said he found pleasure in the fact ADM and sector departments were able to be under one roof discussing developmental issues as this was a challenge in the past.

“The fact that I’ve managed as well to build some kind of capacity, though in a limited time, with some municipal managers, is an achievement. It is upon them whether they will succeed in executing their daily duties or responsibilities. They must take the baton and run with it,” he said.

The IDP/Budget document is expected to be adopted by the council during the state of district address scheduled to be delivered by ADM Executive Mayor, Sakhumzi Somyo.  
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