



## LEARNING NOTES

### **WORLD PLANNING DAY BUILDING RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIEIS: POST 2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA 17 NOVEMBER 2015 DURBAN ICC**

One of the most significant outcomes from the 2012 Rio+20 Summit was the SDGs, a new set of goals to succeed the MDGs in 2015. To support the process, eThekweni Municipality in partnership with COGTA to help find solutions to some of the world's most pressing environmental, social and economic problems.

#### **SESSION 1: LOCALISING THE POST 2015 AGENDA AND PERSPECTIVES FROM POLITICAL LEADERSHIP**

Brookes outlined the 17 SDG Goals and their linkage to PGDP as well as their implementation within the scope of the NDP in the context of KZN. Province is establishing and maintaining a direct line of sight to the SGDs, NDO and the 2014 – 2019 MTSF. The focus now is planning alignment for integrated implementation. In SA we acknowledge the triple challenge of poverty, equality and unemployment. The NDP has developed six pillars that deal with the elimination of poverty and the reduction of equality. In order to render the aspirations of the NDP and SDGs, **MUNICIPALITIES NEED THE POLITICAL WILL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ABILITY TO DELIVER. As MUNICIPLITIES, WE NEED TO MATCH THE 14 OUTCOMES OF THE NDP AND MATCH THEM WITH THE 17 SDGs.**

Ms Dube–Ncube, the MEC KZN COGTA, noted that there is a critical importance of SDGs especially in the context of KZN which is predominately rural in nature. Town and Regional Planners have a significant and relevant role to play in addressing the challenges of today. The broader agenda of SDGs is to implement and align it with local plans. Municipalities need to develop action plans in order to ensure that the objectives of the SDGs are met.

Brookes stated that SDGs must be endorsed by local government in all respect. A lesson learned is that MDGs underlie the importance of local government in the delivery of the development goals. Whilst there are challenges, there are also opportunities if local government uses the implementation levers that exist

in the SDGs. The AU 2063 agenda also serve as a guide to our vision for sustainable development if Africa. **SUCCESSFUL MUNICIPALITIES ARE THOSE THAT LEARN, ADAPT AND INNOVATE.** Cohesive and integrated towns and cities must be planned today and local government must lead the way.

## **SESSION 2: PANEL DISUCSSION UNPACKING THE SGD<sub>s</sub> – THINKING GLOBALLY AND ACTING LOCALLY – DEVELOPMENTAL CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES: TOWARDS THE CREATION OF LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES**

### **Questions**

1. What does SDGs mean for local government practitioners and politicians?
2. How do municipalities grapple with global issues?

SDGs are a global agenda and municipalities are facing local challenges. However, changes taking place globally have an impact locally. Equally, acting locally has an impact on a global scale. In the implementation of the SDGs, we must be cognisant of the context of geopolitics. However, the SDGs must be embedded and mainstreamed into the IDPs as a strategic plan of the municipality. SDGs need to need to be part of our performance plans and we also need to raise awareness and fostering partnerships with political leadership, business, NGOs, Academia, Civil Society and other spheres of society. Municipalities are at crossroads and Planners have an opportunity to make a contribution towards the achievement of SDGs.

The implementation of the SDGs is a balancing act between local and global issues. However, there are still practical challenges and issues at the level of municipalities that might hinder the implementation of SGD<sub>s</sub>. Some of the issues include the lack of capacity, poor alignment, and lack of resources, planning and prioritisation and so on. Given the stagnant economy is South Africa, all spheres of government need to pull together resources in the delivery of SDGs. The role of Treasury as a distributor of funding has changed over the years and is now focusing their attention on compliance, transformation, alternative financing mechanisms, planning, support, and some of the general needs of municipalities. The use of funding needs to be rationalised and channel towards SDGs.

The shift from MDGs to SDGs has seen the increase in targets in an attempt to foster change. The SDGs must be implemented on the basis of the reality of South Africa. The linkage between the NDP and SDGs shows a number of synergies. The points raised in the SDGs are not alien in the context of South

Africa and have been encapsulated in the NDP and the PGDP. South Africa is well positioned to respond to the objectives and goals of the SDGs.

### **What are the biggest obstacles, challenges and issues faced by Planners in municipalities?**

SDGs are deliberated at a high level in government whilst civil society is not capacitated to also respond to SDGs and perhaps make municipalities account for their implementation. In dealing with SDGs, we need to consider changing institutional mind sets and foster alignment to ensure implementation. Training and research needs to be “beefed up” in order to deal with the challenges faced in towns and cities as well as rural areas. The quality standards of mentorship and internship programme in municipalities needs to be improved significantly. SDG champions need to be capacitated and resourced in order to represent the targets.

Market forces have dominated all aspects of our society, where everything revolves around buying and selling.

### **KEY LEARNING AREAS AND WAY FORWARD**

Maharaj summarised the key learning areas and way forward.

- Planners are well placed in the built environment profession to understand all the aspects of the various fields to make a difference in our society.
- The role of cities as investment hubs and growth is also leading to a lot of inequality.
- There is a need to have a differential approach to local government in order to contribute significantly to the implementations of SDGs.
- SDGs need to be understood in the context of our local agenda.
- Inclusive cities are needed to bridge communities that were once divided under apartheid.
- Planning is multisectoral and therefore there is a great need for partnerships.
- Planning in its current state is fragmented and lacks an implementation focus. It needs to be institutionalised across all spheres of governments and civil society.
- Students need to be empowered with skills and character.
- Municipalities have not yet achieved integration and reshaping the apartheid cities.
- One threat to SDGs is not achieving world peace.

Planners have a responsibility in shaping the world and contributing to SDGs. They need to be translated into KPIs and are measurable. On-going mentoring and evaluation of the targets also need to be undertaken.