



## **Anti-Corruption Indaba, Birchwood Conference Centre, 21 November 2017**

Honourable Premier

Members of the Executive Council

The Chairperson and Members of the GPG Ethics Advisory Council

Members of the Gauteng Provincial Legislature

Executive Mayors and Members of Mayoral Committees from Municipalities

Director-General, Heads of Departments and Municipal Managers

Leaders of Religious Communities, Trade Unions, Business groups and Non-Governmental Organisations

Distinguished guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is an absolute pleasure to welcome all of you to the Gauteng Ethics and Anti-Corruption Indaba. Thank you for accepting our invitation and making time to be present today. We gratefully acknowledge your attendance and we are certain that you will add value to the discussions and outcomes of this gathering.

The Gauteng Ethics and Anti-Corruption Indaba comes at an opportune moment. Currently, there is an intense and important national discourse on “state capture”, fraud, corruption, unethical conduct and the abuse of public resources by those holding public office for personal gain. The incidence and occurrence of such wrongful conduct is evident across varied sectors in society; be it in government nationally, provincially and locally, in business enterprises large and small; and in communities more widely.

Unethical, fraudulent and corrupt acts take many different forms. It can be:

- a traffic officer asking for a petty bribe and a citizen actually giving it to avoid a hefty traffic fine;
- a Principal or member of a School Governing Body embezzling school funds;
- a young person paying a driving school instructor, who in turn pays an examiner, to fraudulently process a driver’s license;
- a public servant receiving lucrative gifts in cash or kind to facilitate an award of a tender in favour of a particular company;
- a resident or business entity paying an official in a municipality to wipe off a debt related to an outstanding water and electricity account;
- a Director of a company bribing an official in the South African Revenue Services to substantially reduce his/her taxes or abort a tax investigation;
- a Magistrate who subverts the course of justice after being paid;



- a policeman who ensures a case docket gets lost;
- a Presiding Officer making an irrational judgement in a labour dispute; and
- a politician or his/her family member receiving rewards from private sources for large government contracts.

In short, corruption is the “misuse of entrusted power for private gain”. It is the abuse of public resources or power for personal gain. It is the antithesis of the common, democratic good. What is extremely worrying is that there is a growing and widespread public perception – rightly or wrongly - that corruption is systemic in our body politic. This calls for urgent and collective action on our part.

Today’s Indaba affords all of us a shared platform to confront such unlawful, illegal and undemocratic practices. We have to see things for what they really are, and decide what we’re going to do about them. The aim is to emerge with a well-considered and concise plan of action for the Gauteng Provincial Government and municipalities in the Gauteng City-Region to act against wrongful and corrupt conduct in both the public and private sectors.

It is important to recognise that integrity is a personality trait that we all should inculcate in our lives. Having integrity means being honest and acting in accordance with strong moral and ethical principles. The renowned African novelist, Chinua Achebe, has reminded us of an important maxim: “One of the truest tests of integrity is its blunt refusal to be compromised”. Can we collectively inspire such behaviour throughout government and in society at large in our province?

The Gauteng Provincial Government takes the firm view that it is the responsibility of each and every citizen in our province to contribute to the fight against fraud, corruption and unethical conduct. This is a multi-stakeholder challenge requiring multi-sectoral collaboration and solutions. This Indaba is an important step in mobilising a wide array of forces in society to combat corruption and to promote integrity and ethics in our public life.

We have with us today key stakeholders from across sectors engaged in anti-corruption work. Our job is discuss the trends and challenges encountered and suggest practical solutions that should be adopted to promote good governance and to combat corruption in our province. We have with us representatives from Corruption Watch; The Ethics Institute and other professional bodies; academics; religious, business and trade union leaders; members of law enforcement agencies and public servants to discuss the issues and share best practice. Importantly, we have international experts from Denmark and the United Kingdom to share their experiences in this field.

The Gauteng Provincial Government is deeply committed to strengthening clean governance and enhancing integrity in the Gauteng City-Region. This commitment is clearly evident in the establishment by the Premier of a civil society-led Ethics Advisory Council, which will provide expert advice on strategies to fight against corruption; exercise oversight over the Provincial Cabinet and hold it accountable for its actions or inaction on governance matters.



It is in this context that we meet to give substance to the theme of this Indaba: **“GOVERNING IN PUBLIC INTEREST: INTENSIFYING THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION AND PROMOTING ETHICAL LEADERSHIP IN GAUTENG”**.

We are confident that this Indaba will share best practices as well as determine necessary measures aimed at strengthening efforts to fight corruption and to promote integrity in the province.

Speech by MEC Dr Ismail Vadi