



## OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR

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### **Council Speech by Executive Mayor, Ald. Tania Campbell**

***24 November 2022***

Speaker of Council

Whip of Council

Mayoral Committee Members

Councillors

City Manager

HODs and Officials

Residents for Ekurhuleni

Welcome,

Today is a special day in council as we celebrate the conferment of the title of Alderman status upon several of our colleagues seated in this chamber.

There are low moments in the life of a councillor, where the magnitude of the job at hand is overwhelming.

There are moments when quitting may seem alluring.

Yet, your fortitude and willpower have pushed you beyond what you thought possible.

The beneficiaries of your determinism are the communities you serve.

It is they who have savoured the fruits of your labour through impeccable service delivery and hard work.

The title conferred upon you today is borne of the recognition of your duty and service given to residents of this City.

You have shown dedicated, compassionate, and unwavering service to all our residents.

The city and its residents thank you for your tireless service and confer you the title of Alderman.

I am honoured to stand before you, once again, as the Executive Mayor of the City of Ekurhuleni.

The 26th of October 2022 is a day that will live in infamy in the minds of residents and businesses of this City.

It will be remembered as the day that those who decided to play games with the lives of our residents chose to place their narrow, self-serving interests ahead of the people whom they were elected to serve.

Instead of asking, “What can I do for those who elected me – to make their lives better, to improve their quality of life?”, the question at the forefront in the minds of these antagonists is: “What can I do for myself and my connections?”.

This was exemplified no less by the Councillor who stood up and admitted that he was here to take a position.

I applaud his honesty.

Not many in this Council have the enthusiasm, nor the gall to expose their true nature.

While he may be alone in his honesty, he is by no means alone in being lured by the trappings of power.

Across the aisle, and all seven in between, are those who paddle in the murky water of disinformation and lies to attain what they seek most – power at all costs.

The needs of residents were never of their agenda.

Their agenda was self-gratification and power.

It would be remiss of me if I did not address the elephant in the room.

I am under no illusion that I find myself in the hot seat, once again.

I am under no illusion that I am going to be labelled as things that I am not, because this has already begun.

My team, which is inclusive of other parties represented in the council, will also be labelled as things that they are not.

I know unequivocally that 20 years of failed governance will be painted as our fault.

Shame on you!

History will not remember you favourably, nor will the residents who have judged you harshly for your foolish antics.

Before the motion brought against me, the Multi-party Coalition worked tirelessly to kick service delivery into high gear.

The rot is deep and the backlog wide.

But, we were undeterred, because unlike those who we inherited this mess from – we are not in the business of abusing the mandate given to us by the people.

Despite the most trying conditions we were resuscitating the City, breathing life back into her lungs.

We were inspiring hope.

We were instilling a culture of pride.

We were turning the tide on the rot.

We did this by getting back to basics.

Abandoned, dust gathering projects across the city have been resuscitated and are now of service to residents – as they should have been when they were built.

As part of our health and social development response during numerous engagements with communities across the city, we identified the need to roll out programmes to provide sanitary pads to girl children along with wet wipes and essentials to new mothers.

This has now become a reality due to the partnerships we have formed with the private business sector.

Within two months this administration signed contracts with 47 Independent Power Producers (IPPs) that had been sitting collecting dust for years.

This, coupled with the energy wheeling agreement, will bring about R6.5 billion worth of investment into the city and the creation of 2500 direct job opportunities.

It will also allow the city to mitigate one stage of load-shedding, which has now become a daily reality and will not be going away any time soon.

We removed 13 550 illegal connections as well as cut off 974 tampered and bypassed meters.

These steps started to secure our energy grid against prolonged outages while increasing revenue collection.

We electrified 1 367 households which previously had no power.

48 water points have been installed in informal settlements across the city.

Over 5 water reservoirs have been completed including the KwaThema, Impala Park and Pam Brink Reservoirs, where work had come to a complete standstill.

To make the city more attractive to investors and businesses we established a VIP desk within the City Planning Department to cut red tape and prioritize developers.

This has fast-tracked investment into the city as the time for building plan applications has been shortened from a targeted 60 days to 28 days.

We have assisted numerous local and multi-national corporations that struggled to get the basic boxes ticked by the previous administration allowing investment to now flow into the City.

Their commitment to us has been that they will use their corporate social responsibility programmes to assist with skills development in crucial industries.

We undertook to keep our residents safe from skyrocketing crimes that provincial and national governments cannot bring under control.

475 Ekurhuleni Metro Police Recruits completed their Metro Police Training bringing the total number of EMPD police officers up to 2 923.

Next month an additional 674 students who are currently in training will soon join the force to enhance policing.

When we assumed office, we were informed by National Treasury that the City was not compliant with the national policy on the provision of free basic services.

We were told that the previous administration had ignored these regulations because, in an election year, they felt it prudent to bankrupt the city for political expediency.

As the new administration, we had to implement this national policy before the city was pushed off a fiscal cliff.

We immediately saw that this would harm our poorest communities and formulated our debt relief policy that would bring about immediate reprieve to eligible residents.

Within a month, 1 032 new indigents were registered to take full advantage of this programme.

Subsequently, many more qualifying beneficiaries have signed up to take advantage of this programme through the proactive open days we have hosted.

Our debt rehabilitation programme, which will write off 50% of debt more than one year from the date of application approval, is inclusive of rates, service charges, interest, and other costs.

In September 2022 this was further extended to include tenants in Council-owned rental stock.

The multi-party coalition inherited a city that had a backlog of maintenance and a myriad of service delivery issues.

Years of mismanagement and almost no accountability had caused certain departments to fall way behind on their service delivery agreements.

When we assumed office, the respective MMCs worked tirelessly, within budget, to repair neglected infrastructure and get the city back on track.

We were also under no illusion that there has been a concerted effort by elements in the city to undermine the work of the multi-party coalition.

Yet, despite this, we continued to serve all residents with dignity and pride.

112 Hotspots Illegal dumping (1 hotspot per ward) have been cleaned and rehabilitated.

Bulk containers were deployed to improve waste management and sanitation in all informal settlements across the city.

To fast-track moving our people out of undignified living conditions, township regularization has been expedited.

Three townships were identified and have been submitted for registration at the Deeds Office.

Upon finalization, this will culminate in 5 570 title deeds.

Over 48 km of roads have been rehabilitated.

Over 2 100 stormwater systems are maintained.

Over 550 road signs have been installed and maintained and over 29 000 m<sup>2</sup> of potholes have been patched across the city.

These are but some of the achievements of the multiparty coalition.

Unlike the rent-seeking rabble rousers in our midst, we are here to deliver to ALL our communities.

In the nearly three-week, unnecessary, leadership vacuum, the city became a literal dumping site.

From Thokoza to Thembisa, Etwatwa to Edenvale, waste piled up everywhere.

No human being deserves to be subjected to living in filth.

It is inhumane and degrading.

On day one of resuming office, a waste task team was established immediately to clear the backlog and bring about the regularization of services.

The Head of Department (HOD) for Environmental Resources and Waste Management, was placed on administrative leave while the task team does its work to investigate the rot in this department.

This task team gives me regular updates and I am pleased that these interventions are bearing fruit.

It would be remiss of me not to thank the task team for their dedication and strong work ethic in working tirelessly to fix this problem.

I also want to thank the waste department employees for going above and beyond the call of duty to clean up the city.

Residents are now enjoying the services they rightly deserve.

Other service delivery areas, now, more than ever, require our 110% commitment.

I will not waiver in my commitment to restoring this city back to its rightful beauty. A city in where all residents can live, work and play.

My newly appointed MMCs share this vision and value.

As we enter the festive season, I would like each of us in this chamber to reflect on why we are here.

Do you stand for the poor and downtrodden?

Do you stand for the marginalized and forgotten?

Do you stand for those who cannot stand up for themselves?

Do you fight for a brighter, inclusive future for all our residents?

When a hand is offered to do the right thing – will you grasp on your own because the residents of this City deserve no less?

Or will you retreat into the darkness of power at all costs?

I would like to quote the Algerian-born philosopher, Albert Camus:

“In the midst of winter, I found there was, within me, an invincible summer. And that makes me happy.

For it says that no matter how hard the world pushes against me, within me, there’s something stronger – something better, pushing right back.”

Residents of Ekurhuleni,

The sun has set on the cold, dark winter that has been for too long and engulfed this city.

We are in the season of an invincible summer.

This administration is pushing back, better, and stronger for every single one of you.

At this time of the year, we mark the start of 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

Earlier in the year we took part in a march against the scourge of GBV and said, “Enough is enough!”.

I want to reiterate that enough is enough!

Every single day should be a day to condemn GBV. But condemning it alone is not enough.

We must create a culture that abhors violence and abuse. We must instil an ethos of respect in our young men and boys.

We must give shelter to the victims of this scourge allow them to be afforded the space in which to feel safe and heal from their abuse.

If we work together, we will overcome and break the cycle of abuse once and for all.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that if you are travelling, please adhere to the rules of the road and exercise caution.

Abiding by the law is not only for your benefit. It is for your families and loved ones, as well as other road users.

Be safe this December. Arrive alive!

2023 will be the year Ekurhuleni’s star shines.

I look forward to its light shining on all our residents.

I like to would wish each Councillor, city official and every resident a blessed festive season and New Year.

I thank you.

END