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Executive Mayor,
Cllr Sivuyile Ngodwana

S O C G A

STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

25 April 2023



STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS DELIVERED BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF EKURHULENI CLLR SIVUYILE NGODWANA AT THE O.R. TAMBO GOVERNMENT PRECINCT IN GERMISTON

25 APRIL 2023

The Speaker of Council - Cllr Nthabiseng Tshivhenga

Whip of Council - Alderman Jongizizwe Dlabathi

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Members of the Mayoral Committee

Fellow Councillors

The City Manager - Dr Imogen Mashazi

Senior Management and Staff of Council

Distinguished Guests

Members of the Media

And most importantly, the Community of Ekurhuleni

Good morning! Molweni! Sanibona! Dumelang!

It is an honour to stand here this morning and deliver such an important policy statement for the City. I feel very humbled that I have been entrusted with this very important task to address the people of Ekurhuleni, Gauteng and the country at large, on what the future holds for this dynamic region.

This is a task I undertake with great humility and a clear appreciation of what today's message means to the people of Ekurhuleni. What makes today even more special is that this is the first *State of the City Address* to be delivered by **The People's Government** – a collaborative governance of the **ANC, EFF, AIC, COPE, NFP, UDM, PAC, PA, IRASA, ICM and ATM.**

Before I go any further, please allow me Madam Speaker to share the City's heartfelt condolences at the death of one of our own, the late former Councillor Koketso Mojatau.

Indeed, this is extremely sad, and the people of South Africa have been robbed of a very robust yet intelligent servant of the people. Goodspeed to the EFF, the community of Ekurhuleni and his loved ones.

It was in November 2021 when we embarked on a democratic local government election. During this process, our people gave us the mandate to improve their living standards. Indeed, we had raised our hands to ask for their votes because we believed in our efforts to bring about change. Unfortunately, we could not really do much as the minority government came into power and took over the reins – the rest is history.

Fast-forward 16 months later we, as **The People's Government**, have now taken the baton and the service delivery machinery gets in motion with earnest right now. We have taken the ropes so that we can do that which the previous government could not do.

Let me remind this august house what our agenda is: **Service delivery; Service delivery; and Service delivery**. That is why for this *State of the City Address* we have adopted the theme: **“Working together to build better and prosperous communities”**.

Honourable Speaker, this speech takes place at a very historical time in our democracy. It takes place two days before the 29th anniversary of the first democratic elections on 27 April 1994. Who can forget this historic day when throngs of our people went all out to vote and declare that the days of that demonic, atrocious and brutal governance system called **apartheid** is defeated.

Exactly 15 days ago today, we commemorated the 30th anniversary of the brutal killing of Chris Hani – a ruthless act which almost threw the country into civil war. One speaker after another at that gathering held at the Thomas Nkobi Cemetery, right here in Boksburg, reminded us that the struggle for liberation is not over until we improve the lives of ordinary citizens – many of whom still live below the bread line.

We were continuously reminded that the best way to honour selfless leaders of our struggle, who paid the ultimate price to liberate us, is to ensure that we free our people from all the

clutches of apartheid through job creation, provision of proper housing, taking them out of poverty and broadening services to all.

Honourable Speaker, we have been busy in recent weeks crisscrossing the region and consulting our people about their needs as part of the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) process. The one common thread in these sessions has been the cry for better services. Our people are making it clear that all they need is the provision of sustainable quality services and a better life.

They want the grass to be cut; they want sustainable water supply; they want regular waste removal; they want potholes to be fixed; they want job opportunities; and they are also crying for an end to prolonged power outages that go beyond the load shedding schedule. Indeed, these are genuine needs because we have experienced and witnessed the collapse of service delivery of the highest order under the previous regime. This is a collective that cannot claim any victory for they never delivered anything save to almost collapse the City.

They came and introduced a myth and buzzword called '**Back to Basics**' which became a spectacular flop that only focused on selected minority communities with very little impact, if any. Indeed, this was a glorified new apartheid service delivery system which the DA introduced in areas where it leads like the Western Cape and Midvaal.

On various occasions, we were misled that the finances of the City had stabilized when in actual fact it was the direct opposite.

We also witnessed areas like Thembisa deteriorating to chaos as the minority government refused to meet and engage the people on issues of critical importance. This demonstrated that the majority of our people did not matter to them, because the Thembisa uprisings could have been avoided had the minority government listened to the concerns raised by our people. As a result of this carelessness, the City suffered losses worth millions while the people of Thembisa remain neglected in the aftermath of the protestation.

Well, all this comes to an end right now. **The People's Government** is here to bring change with immediate effect. We have heard the concerns of our people. They have said that they are tired of promises and indeed, we commit to let our actions do the talking. We are not going to be about lip service but boots on the ground. This is an era of less time in the office and more time in our communities and doing work on the ground.

Madam Speaker, I now present our approach to improving the lives of our people in Ekurhuleni. We have devised pillars that should drive us towards that end state.

POLITICAL STABILITY

Upfront, we are **Prioritizing Political Stability** in order to eliminate frivolous motions of no confidence for the stabilization of service delivery and effective provision of essential services. Political stability becomes central to providing basic security, and basic human needs services for the future and continuous sustainable growth within the City. Without political stability, internal squabbles take centre stage and services take a back seat while time is spent trying to resolve squabbles resulting in delays in providing services, and public servants become gatekeepers who unfairly regulate access to resources and opportunities that they control affecting the coherent need for provision of services to the community.

To avoid this, there must be a foundational understanding of the democratic and political principles, and tactical and necessary trade-offs for the sake of progressive and tangible development. The trade-offs in this context refer, more than anything, to the ability of **The People's Government** to be willing to accept that attitudes across political parties and mentalities must never suffer from political rigidity but must maintain the necessary agility that ultimately puts new approaches to the test, and not fail them as they appear on the horizon.

The recently experienced squabbles caused political instability in the City of Ekurhuleni and led to a monumental impact on the administration's ability to effectively deliver services and adhere to legislated compliance timelines. The People's Government has a clear appreciation and understanding that such cannot be allowed to persist – and we understand that the City is in dire need of a capable executive that will prioritize stability, and financial

prudence and lead the City into a sphere where it is able to provide proper and coherent strategic direction that results in improved governance and clear political leadership in the administration.

SUSTAINABLE PROVISION OF BASIC SERVICES

We want to assure residents that the era of lethargic service delivery has come to an end. We commit to ensuring that what is expected of this collective happens and that residents get their money's worth. The characterization of developmental local government dictates that we need to provide quality, equitable and sustainable services to our people. Equally, transformation requires an understanding of the historical role of local government in creating and perpetuating local separation and inequity, and the impact of apartheid on municipal institutions.

We must therefore start with **Prioritizing the Stabilization of Energy/Electricity** in the City. In this regard, we undertake to carry out the following:

ENERGY

- Looking into diversified energy sources and adding to electricity capacity to limit and contribute to ending load-shedding through the enhancement of access to reliable, affordable, and sustainable electricity;
- Upgrading and maintaining the electricity network by ensuring that the City's electrical assets and infrastructure are well managed and resilient in addition to improving access to electricity to all - especially broadening the service to new developments and informal settlements;
- Re-block and electrify **12** additional informal settlements **within the remainder of the term**;
- We must be very stringent towards individuals, organized systemic sabotage, and syndicates that make a living off stripping the City of its power - both literally and figuratively;

- Assets of the City that contribute in one way or the other must be tamper-proof, highly resistant to vandalism and ultimately crime-proof. This is an achievable feat that simply needs expertise and political will;
- Smart metering systems focusing on load control on residential and small commercial installations shall be accelerated. This will assist customers to understand load control better, and that load reduction can be applied by smart systems reducing non-essential loads automatically; and
- We shall introduce load-shedding exemptions for qualifying industrial customers to ensure continuity of supply and revenue protection.

WATER

The time has come for the City to seriously look into its own ventures that will give it greater access to the sourcing and distribution of water, as opposed to the current high level of reliance on the infrastructure provided by Rand Water – as we recently witnessed how this current status quo affected the eastern part of the region in recent months. There are also the inevitable ever-increasing tariffs imposed by Rand Water which ultimately have an adverse effect on the City's operational budget - putting the bulk of the burden onto the City's taxpayers. In ensuring sustainable water supply we promise the following:

- To fix water leaks, including fixing in-house leakages for indigent households – thus **scaling down non-revenue water**;
- In building water security, we shall ensure the completion and operationalization of all the **29 water reservoirs** currently under construction. The good news in this regard is that we plan to complete nine (9) of these new reservoirs within the next 100 days and these are: Crossings, Edelweiss, Masetchaba, Fairland, Olifantsfontein, Isando, Etwatwa, Palmridge and Zulu/Xhosa;
- We will **build internal capacity in respect of water tankers** as a way of mitigating the impact of water outages as and when there are instances of water interruptions;
- Assign and fund ERWAT to scale up the **rehabilitation of waste facilities**, reticulation and capacity expansion given the fast-growing population; and
- **Upscale the maintenance of sewer networks** to minimise sewer spillages.

Honourable Speaker, we also accept that we have a responsibility to bring dignity to our people in informal settlements. In this regard, we shall be fast-tracking the exploration and implementation of a better prototype solution for an informal settlement ablution system, especially where re-blocking and electrification have been successfully completed.

We now come to other critical services:

- There shall be a consistent **collection of waste** and the pursuit of a community-based cleaning programme so that people can take care of their own environment;
- We shall further ensure that waste disposal and **landfill sites are fully operational and clean** at all times to avoid any unexpected disruption to the service;
- Landfill sites that are close to communities shall be **properly treated** for any stench and health threat to the local communities;
- On the top of every emerging City's priorities is the ability to transform their metropolitans into **green centres**, this means paying massive attention to recycling as a significant form of personal income and sustenance;
- Ekurhuleni has historically been known as an industrial hub, however, the City has to date never had any large-scale recycling co-operative with major firms that service the length and breadth of this country;
- It is very important that all cemeteries and open spaces are **well maintained** and the grass is cut at all times;
- The City must put in place a well-defined environmental policy structure that can contribute with more certainty to the investment and service delivery environment;
- We shall be accelerating the fixing of potholes on our **roads and the maintenance of stormwater** the drainage systems;
- We expect the construction and completion of 2.9km and **nine stormwater systems** by the end of June;
- Focused-based development on roads and stormwater construction, prioritizing outstanding roads in townships; and
- The implementation of the **Integrated Rapid Transport Network** and the **Harambee** public transport shall be accelerated with the addition of dedicated bus

lanes, walkways, stream crossings and curbside stops. We shall also be adding to the fleet to ease the movement of our people from home to places of work.

RESPONSIVENESS TO SERVICE DELIVERY

Madam Speaker, all that I have touched on here cannot yield the desired results and impact on society if we do not improve our interaction with our residents and customers. Over the past few months, we have received complaints about our **responsiveness to service delivery** interruptions. One of the major complaints is the lack of communication between the City and our residents and customers, especially when critical information about an interruption is needed. In this regard we shall drive the re-engineering of the functionality of the City's Call Centre and improve integration with service departments; enforce the implementation of service delivery standards; and maintain the Service Delivery Mayoral Outreach Programme – Maintenance, Repairs and Project Monitoring.

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This *State of the City Address* takes place on the heels of South Africa's technical recession, the COVID-19 pandemic, Eskom's load-shedding and other structural constraints that have directly affected efforts to grow and develop the municipal regional economy. However, we continue to navigate the regional economy as it transits from the post-economic relief phase, into the economic recovery phase whilst leveraging instruments in the public, private and diplomatic sectors to move the regional economy into an economic stimulus phase.

In effect, we need to start by accepting that today's economic environment requires the City to embrace and enforce critical and lateral thinking across our operations as well as problem solving mentality, skills and capabilities in order to remain competitive and impactful in the global economic landscape. In as much as the post-crisis period has had a silver lining on South Africa by emphasizing the role of municipalities as the engines for growth, development, transformation and transfer this realization presents municipalities

such as ours with the opportunity to address economic divides that sit at the heart of our socio-economic profile.

In this regard, the time has never been so opportune to implement a well-coordinated **Spatial, Social and Economic Justice Compact** that ignites an inclusive economic growth trajectory that would redress many of our long-term economic vulnerabilities.

Therefore, as this Administration, we are going to:

- **Re-engineer the Vukophile Programme** to focus on maintenance within the built environment - incubating 50 young people (gender equal) **skills development:** plumbing, carpentry, landscaping, road, sewer and stormwater maintenance, fixing of streets and traffic lighting;
- Release land for the local trading precinct to stimulate local trading and job creation. This should include the creation of a platform for flea markets in the township to promote the sale of locally produced brands;
- Support **300** South African black-owned tuck shops with a view to enhancing their competitiveness;
- Support the modernization of **150** viable fruit and vegetable trading businesses that are owned by bona fide South Africans [support for informal trading];
- Revive the City's **tourism route** in collaboration with the private sector;
- Continue to support access to tertiary education through the City's bursary intervention [80% technical and 20% others, spread across universities, universities of technology and TVET colleges]. This will be done with a transformative approach towards the infrastructural, social, and economic needs of the poorest areas to promote an attitude of acquiring skills in order to be part of contributing to the social and developmental needs of the City;
- Fastrack the release of strategic land parcels for the Revitalization of the Manufacturing and Retail Industry; and
- Pursue the implementation of the **Aerotropolis master plan**.

The People's Government advocates that the **Special Economic Zones** within the City be massively expanded, protected, and supported in order to aid in ending the socio-economic crisis of joblessness.

We further need to **Prioritize Economic Development through the Industrialization** of Ekurhuleni as a workshop of the Gauteng province. This is imperative to address the City's unemployment rate which sits at 31.6 %, which is higher than the provincial and national average. This means that we must be a City that operates differently when relating to SMMEs. Furthermore, Special Economic Zones must equally moonlight as food security hubs for economic activity.

Madam Speaker, this administration will demonstrate a stronger commitment to the creation of a conducive environment that enables regional economic development, competitiveness, transformation and growth. We remain committed to stimulating the township economy development, business regulation, community enterprise development and empowerment.

With the acknowledgement that township youth in our City continues to face a harsh and unprecedented unemployment and poverty crisis, it is a no-brainer that our Local Economic Development programme is anchored on the stimulation of the Township Economy. This will also require using service delivery as a foundation for bringing investment and jobs to the City's local economy by making it easier to do business within the municipality while inversely helping to formalize and provide financial support to SMMEs.

FOOD SECURITY

The 2023 Household Affordability Index indicates that basic food items like sugar beans, rice, flour and bread have seen price hikes of between 31% and 68% year on year. The high price increases have necessitated an examination of food systems and value chains to gain a wider understanding of their transitional and transfer mechanisms, which continues to impact food security and urban poverty within the municipal jurisdiction.

In short, we have resolved that our response to the food security challenge in Ekurhuleni hinges on our understanding of the **Availability, Accessibility and Affordability** equation which impacts negatively the poorest of the poor. It is also common cause that the majority of black South Africans were intentionally barred from effective participation and from making a meaningful contribution to the food value chain through a systematic programme to restrict land ownership, access to implements, infrastructure, technology, capabilities and markets.

It is for this very reason that our response to the food insecurity challenge should redress the very cause of the problem by relaxing and expediting processes that can provide access to land and security of tenure.

In this regard we have resolved to:

- **Radically release of Strategic Land Parcels** for light production, farming and agri-processing through a capable and developmental approach that will enable collaboration, leveraging and technology diffusion amongst economic players on a fair and equitable basis in order to redress historical inequities;
- Develop and support **small-scale farmers through our farmland release** programme - basic training and ongoing capacitation programme to enhance farming skills and new technologies;
- Deliberately mainstream local black farmers into the **Ekurhuleni Fresh Produce Market** as a way of opening access to the market;
- The Fresh Produce Market must be prioritized for job creation and food security within the City as food security remains critical in Gauteng, with 20% of the population being food insecure;
- There is a need for an aggressive development programme that deals with household food security and coping strategies while supporting **small-scale food traders** and producers as a means to address inequalities within the food system is imperative; and
- The ability of food traders to source and grow various food products is also reliant on their ability to access land that is nearby and land that is fit for medium-to-large-scale farming.

Madam Speaker, we are initiating the introduction and support of Home-Based Food Gardens and viable co-operative food garden projects – and this initiative shall be known as the **Fetsa Tlala Programme**.

LAND AND HOUSING

The prioritization of land requires that the City equally ensure equitable land management and reintegrate informal settlements with infrastructure and services via planning and design. In Ekurhuleni, the implementation of the right to adequate housing has, for example, been plagued by poor planning, a lack of coordination, insufficient capacity, a failure to adequately monitor the implementation of government policies, and a lack of political will. The People's Government, therefore, commits to:

- Provide serviced stands targeting employed youth and professionals that can build their own houses;
- Provide houses mainly for the 1990s applicants, especially pensioners, backyard dwellers, people with disabilities as well the verified and accredited military veterans.
- Deliver decent and affordable rental stock for professionals and the middle class, in collaboration with the private sector;
- Repossess illegally occupied and redundant buildings and subject them to private-public partnership development for social housing, recreation and job creating economic activities;
- Release three strategic land parcels for the development of **Black Owned Estates** [through Black Consortium];
- The Ekurhuleni Housing Company must make a commitment to collect revenue to sustain itself but must equally work towards ensuring that major capital projects that are erected are completed swiftly, and within a reasonable time as a part of the provision of social housing in Ekurhuleni; and
- There should also be a thoroughly conducted land audit that will entail three facets: the City itself identifies dormant, unused land that is simply there because of outdated

property laws that infringe on the rights of the landless. This type of land must immediately be brought under the purview of the portfolio responsible for land, housing and human settlements and all channels to donate this land to the people who need it the most must be exhausted.

Madam Speaker, it is a matter of common course that we need to create healthy communities that are able to contribute actively to turning the fortunes of our region around. We all know that a healthy body harbours a healthy mind – and this combination works very well to prolong the lives of our people while ensuring positive contributions to the building of our communities. We are equally mindful that we must also pay special attention to sport as a response to the social ills affecting our youngsters.

It was Nelson Mandela who captured the essence of sport in society when he said: ***“Sport can create hope, where once was only despair.”***

In this regard, we are advocating for the re-introduction of **aerobics in our parks**, the introduction of the City’s Half Marathon and the support of community sporting events including off-season games. It is our resolve that Ekurhuleni must have a signature event to promote culture and social cohesion, and we must support grand events such as ‘Arts at the Lake’.

The People’s Government is committed to pursuing a modern City library model as part of the smart city – libraries of the future [in collaboration with the province], aimed at accessing information easier while promoting the culture of reading.

Turning to health, we must establish a **People’s Campaign to focus on Healthcare** in order to help minimize the risks which lead to poor health and to respond effectively to health emergencies. This campaign must focus on healthcare by building, maintaining, and capacitating clinics in the City to function 24-hours with permanent doctors and health practitioners, who will not just wait for patients to come to the clinic but will also develop ward-based healthcare profiles. This way, the healthcare system will be able to detect

common diseases inwards and develop mechanisms to prevent their spread before they reach crisis levels.

This must be done alongside the de-commodification of healthcare and an electronic healthcare data system that stores the health history of each patient. This is important in that the City of Ekurhuleni must seriously consider the effects of new technology in the provision of healthcare services to residents who need them. The 4IR has exposed us to the reality that many administrative healthcare processes can be done without long queues or the need for physical interaction. If implemented effectively this innovation can greatly improve the turn-around time for clinic/hospital bookings and visits and can curb costs in the healthcare sector.

We further encourage our health team to continue its quest to completely eradicate mother-to-child transmission from 0.5% at the last count to zero. Queues must also be eradicated at our facilities. The measles vaccination must also be accelerated to reach a million mark by the end of April.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Madam Speaker, it is a matter of fact that crime remains a major problem for our people. People get killed, raped, robbed, and carjacked and we are seeing the rise of house robberies. This situation is not acceptable, and we need to ensure that we create a safe environment for our people. We must create an atmosphere in which everyone feels safe to move around without fear of being a victim of crime. We must bring an end to the scourge of illicit drugs in our communities.

Therefore, we are going to **Prioritize the Curbing of Crime** by not only investing in localized law enforcement but by also enforcing by-laws especially in taverns and clubs, escalating the number of raids in the City, reclaiming hijacked buildings, ensuring more police visibility and presence, effective roadblocks around Ekurhuleni, ensuring effective and continuous grass cutting in high crime areas where criminals hide and engage in uncouth activities without fear.

In this regard, our metro police are directed to:

- Intensify by-law enforcement;
- Protect municipal infrastructure from vandalism and combat the theft of electricity cables; and
- Arrest drug dealers who are turning our City into their own paradise.

This administration shall further upskill EMPD officers to deal with any scenario while increasing the capacity of the department.

Madam Speaker, the issue of **Gender-Based Violence** continues to ravage our communities and we have no choice but to prioritise it. Central to our interventions is the prioritizing of women when it comes to the benefits of economic emancipation, education of the police on gender justice, and the establishment of specialized law enforcement units to deal with women and LGBTQI crimes. Units that encompass skilled and experienced personnel who are not only over-burdened with the workload of other forms of crime but as well as establish community spaces of safety – this is to be done in conjunction with NGOs that are committed to battling GBV. These facilities must be well-resourced and run like other state institutions such as clinics and police stations.

We must continue to aggressively engage public awareness and communication strategies and training interventions that are aimed at or directed towards positively changing social norms while ensuring access to female-specific healthcare and sexual reproductive healthcare in accordance with standards of universal healthcare coverage. In addition, the City must provide free sanitary towels and alternative sanitary materials for women and girls.

Now that it is a matter of common course that the ambulance service has been taken by the provincial government, our Disaster and Emergency Management Services team shall remain on high alert to respond and, or mitigate, any threat or disaster at any given time. We cannot sit back and allow our people to suffer when there is something we can do. Full capacitation of the Disaster and Emergency Management Services team becomes extremely critical in this regard.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Madam Speaker, **The People's Government** has outlined a number of realistic key performance areas, which we aim to implement with immediate effect. However, we also believe that there is a need to focus on the future. In this regard, allow me to outline some strategic initiatives that we will also be pursuing. These include, but are not limited to:

- **Unlocking Private Public Partnership Infrastructure projects:** putting into the market the approved strategic land parcels to ignite investment and to expand the creation of work opportunities;
- **Infrastructure Investment:** focusing on assets that are key in providing social and economic infrastructure [Energy, Water, Roads and other Enablers of economic activities];
- **Pitching Hub for Business Investment** and practical implementation of the Investment Incentive Scheme;
- **High Rise Human Settlements** near economic opportunities;
- **Integrated Public Transport** to ease the movement of goods and people;
- **International Convention Centre and City's Museum;**
- **Botanical Garden;**
- **Exploiting the Lakes and Dams** for economic activities, starting with Germiston Lake, Dries Niemandt; and
- **Lobbying for the take off** in the construction of the university.

FINANCE - SETTING THE TONE FOR THE BUDGET SPEECH

The consideration of the upward population and urbanization remains a burden on the City's financial and institutional resource base. This often results in the inability to accelerate investment that can meet the service delivery demands of the City. In setting the tone for budget significance and impactful development, the City ought to prioritize its envisaged and reasonable mandate as follows:

- Prioritise the agile implementation of **revenue enhancement;**

- Reducing liquidity and credit **risk**;
- Ensuring the elimination of fruitless, wasteful and **unauthorized expenditures**;
- Revising the incentives for consistent payment and discount consideration for settling outstanding debt [both for business and household customers];
- Cost containment – overtime, cost of procuring [Stores and CPO];
- **Payment** – Strict process of giving rise to obligations and a **zero tolerance** to uncontrollable rise to expenditure commitments;
- Smart digital billing, smart and credible billing;
- Build more capacity for in-house collection service;
- Credit Control Policy review [penalty fees, flexible payment arrangements, unlock the challenge of the letter of authority on the indigent application];
- Allocation of funds towards bursaries for needy students;
- Establish procedures and guidelines for the effective subsidization of basic service charges to approved indigent households, within the budgetary and intergovernmental grant guidelines;
- **Budget** – Sustain the provision of consistent basic services, improved repairs and maintenance of public infrastructure, igniting and supporting local economic activities, including the unpacking of the 30% local empowerment, private sector investment [take forward the Investment Clearing Scheme], GDS imperatives (Big Ideas Development);
- End the budgeting for and implementation of many small and fragmented projects whose impact adds no significant value. Our prioritisation must, however, be sensitive to critical ward priorities;
- Quality and impactful budgeting and spending [projects that enhance the sustainable provision of and access to infrastructure.

Furthermore, an **aggressive revenue enhancement campaign** will help to ensure and maintain access to basic services and/or benefits for all identified and deserving poor households, including emergency services rendered by the City.

Additionally, the City must prioritize harvesting grants from both national and provincial governments, such as conditional grants that can be used to support compliance with national norms and standards. The City must provide adequate civil education on the

importance of paying rates and taxes and resolve any limitations to effective tax capacity so as to deliver municipal services at affordable prices, provide free basic services to poor households and promote social and economic development in accordance with the City's development mandate.

The robust revenue enhancement campaign must include a strategic plan for the implementation of free basic service commitments; expand access to infrastructure by poor households, provide support to departments with limited effective tax capacity in the short to medium term; promote the social and economic development of communities; and supporting the restructuring and transformation within the municipality as it becomes more developmentally focused.

Madam Speaker, this is a priority that the **MMC of Finance** will further elaborate on to ensure that the city is in a better position to face the new challenges of delivering more and better-quality services to all residents on a sustained basis while ensuring not to overburden residents.

Madam Speaker, we all know that the word corruption is synonymous with government and as The People's Government we are taking a very clear stance that there is no room for corruption in our era. We are therefore advocating for an **End to Corruption** if it existed and want to make it clear that this will be met with brutal force. If we are serious about regaining the financial stability of the City, we must make sure that we promote governance; hold persons accountable for unscrupulous conduct; ensure there are serious consequences for corruption, fraud, and maladministration; and commit to taking immediate action against perpetrators, including forfeiture of assets, instituting civil claims, and initiating criminal charges and prosecution against them.

Formalized public servants also add to the increase of efficiently run services and facilities and become proactive in calling out and reporting on acts of corruption. The constant renegotiating, cancelling, and re-hiring of service providers create a rampant space for fraud, inflation of prices, and misrepresentation of services actually rendered which contributes to extreme levels of wastage. The City should have a central corruption watch process that does not alienate or make vulnerable potential whistleblowers.

We further commit to ensuring that we assist the administration in filling critical positions and upskilling the current workforce because we understand that in order for us to realise all the commitments we have made, we need a capable and equally committed and skilled workforce to see us to the finish line. We also need to promote a culture of stability and healthy relations between the employer and the employees – so special attention needs to be paid to the relations between all stakeholders in the Local Labour Forum.

What is also of great importance is for our Corporate Legal Services to strengthen relationships and engagements with all internal departments and external stakeholders including the Office of the Auditor-General of SA, Public Protector, and Human Rights Commission to ensure that everything we do is in compliance with other tiers of government.

This department will also implement cost-cutting measures on legal costs including the establishment of a team to vet legal costs and strengthen the involvement of legal advisers in assessing prospects of success and processing contraventions for prosecutions through dedicated courts in the Ekurhuleni magisterial district. The team has further been informed that they must be available to do presentations to community members, as per invite from our political principals, on social issues such as gender-based violence, business processes focusing on women, youth and persons with disabilities, wills and estates and general legal compliance.

In my acceptance speech I indicated that upon the conclusion of engagements between the various partners, we will articulate the collective focus areas, which should pay attention to financial sustainability, consistent and reliable service offering, strategic initiatives that must boost the regional economy, infrastructure development and upgrade, pragmatic approach to supporting and developing township economies, taking forward the GDS imperatives, and productive use of land and housing.

This I indicated would require a great deal of focus approach, and institutional management that will give meaning to our strategic path, as well as a labour force that will

deliver on the new mandate. Indeed, I have done justice to this, and everyone is now clear about what *The People's Government* is all about. We want to be remembered as the team that pulled Ekurhuleni out of the woods and propelled service delivery excellence. Let us all roll up our sleeves - ***Isikhathi sokusebenza ses'fikile!!!!***

As I close, allow me to thank all stakeholders who gave meaning to this policy document. I further want to appeal to businesses, young people, community organisations and communities in general to keep us in check so that we do not drop the ball in the mandate we are undertaking.

Let me also make a special appeal to the City Manager to continue running a tight ship that is well galvanized to deliver a better life to the people of Ekurhuleni.

Together we can make this work.

Madam Speaker, this is the *State of the City Address*. I Thank You!!!!







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