

COUNCIL SPEECH BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF EKURHULENI CLLR. SIVUYILE NGODWANA AT THE COUNCIL MEETING OF JULY AT O.R. TAMBO GOVERNMENT PRECINCT IN GERMISTON

27 July 2023

The Speaker of Council – Cllr Nthabiseng Tshivhenga

Whip of Council – Alderman Jongizizwe Dlabathi

Leaders of Political Parties in Council

Members of mayoral committee

Leader of Government Business

Fellow Councillors

The City Manager – Dr Imogen Mashazi

Senior Management and Staff of Council

Distinguished Guests

Leaders of Business and Captains of Industry

Members of the Media

And the Community of Ekurhuleni

Good morning!!

It was in this council chamber that the People’s Government was given the mandate to deliver a better life for the people of Ekurhuleni. I remember vividly standing here and accepting the mandate and committing to the people of Ekurhuleni that we shall do less talking and more work.

We further committed that we shall be accountable to our people every step of the way because we believe that we have a duty to update them on everything we do. We once again wish to thank the people of Ekurhuleni for

having chosen us to lead them, and more over lead the campaign to fulfil their hunger for a better Ekurhuleni.

Madam Speaker, this speech takes place during the month of July, a month that is synonymous with the acts of goodwill of the father of our liberation struggle father of our struggle Dr Nelson Mandela. We joined millions of people around the world and doing good for the less fortunate in our communities. Allow me to make a clarion call that the spirit of this month must never end nor stop – because many of our people languish in poverty, joblessness and squalor.

While the spirit of Madiba continues to sweep through our streets and hearts, it would be a grave injustice on our part as The People's Government if we did not send a message of support and condolences to the families of gas leak victims here in Angelo. This incident came as a huge shock and also exposed us to the harsh reality that we need to do something about illegal mining as a government as in yesterday.

What was extremely breath-taking was the fact that some of the illegal gold sourcing facilities are in the middle of our communities – putting many innocent lives at risk. Let me take this opportunity to thank all the good Samaritans who came through for these bereaved families and the injured during their time of need and desperation.

Honourable Speaker, I can confirm and commit here today that the city will support any initiative that is aimed at ending the scourge of illegal mining in our glorious province and region. As a former mining region, it is to be expected that we would have a hive of such activity as people flock in to source a better life, but enough is enough for this dangerous activity. National,

provincial and local government need to join hands with other stakeholders to deal with problem. There is also a need to engage our neighbouring countries to assist in our efforts because most of the Zama Zamas come from there.

The People's Government, which is a collaborative governance of the **ANC, EFF, AIC, COPE, NFP, UDM, PAC, PA, IRASA, ICM and ATM** has been hard at work since the beginning of our term of office early in the year. Our road has not been easy, but we remain satisfied that we are on the right track. For anyone doubting this, you do not have to look further than the stability of this government since then.

In fact, the Chairman of the COGTA oversight committee in the national assembly Honourable China Dodovu publicly declared that '*Ekurhuleni is one of the best municipalities in the country*'. Dodovu further indicated that there are plans to invite the city to the national assembly to share best practice and hopefully even empower other sister municipalities.

A few months back, we also received four awards from the SA Local Government Association in Gauteng, for excellence in finance management and reporting. ***Kuyasetshezwa – Masisebenzeni.***

Our agenda still remains ***service delivery, service delivery and service delivery*** informing our theme: ***Working together to build better and prosperous communities***".

We remain glued in working with our communities. We shall continue to listen more to our people and bring them on board on issues of governance in the

city – that is why we are spending less time in the office and more time with the people.

Fellow Councillors, when we took the reins, we undertook to among others:

- Stabilize the institution politically in order to eliminate frivolous motions of no confidence for the stabilization of service delivery and effective provision of essential services;
- Re-instate the bursary scheme;
- Fill critical positions to ensure that the city operates better and efficiently;
- Fast-track service delivery, especially in areas that had service delivery challenges;
- Introduce a signature event for the city;
- Boost the economy;
- Stabilize waste removal; and
- **Bring change with immediate effect.**

We made the promises because we heard the concerns our people.

Today, Madam Speaker, we want to give a brief report back to demonstrate the speed at which our train is moving in taking our people to a better life destination.

SUSTAINABLE PROVISION OF BASIC SERVICES:

In our attempts to speed up service delivery, I can confidently say that we are winning the war. We have repackaged the Mayoral Outreach Programme and launched our own known as The People's Government at Work – **Masisebenzeni**. Unlike the previous campaign, which was meant for window

dressing, this campaign has taken us to most parts of the city where service delivery challenges were unlocked and continue to be unlocked. In actual fact, tomorrow we shall be getting our hands dirty right here in Germiston.

Masisebenzeni has so far demonstrated that all the coalition partners in this Government of the People are driven by the same agenda which is to improve the quality of life and ensure that all the people of Ekurhuleni receive the same quality of services consistently.

The stabilisation of the **Energy/Electricity** grid is already underway. This one is two-pronged, because not only are we improving our infrastructure, but we are also securing it – hence the employment of highly equipped security companies who have been given a clear mandate to protect our infrastructure from theft and vandalism.

We are still pursuing diversified energy sources and adding to our electricity capacity to limit the impact of load shedding.

Our plans to introduce load shedding exemptions for qualifying industrial customers to ensure continuity of supply and revenue protection, remain on track.

Working with Rand Water, one can report that the system is stabilising and less water outages are being reported. Furthermore, on the issue of water security final touches are now being carried out on a number of already completed water reservoirs and towers throughout the city.

Madam Speaker, our biggest challenge in the area of water has been high lying areas, especially when you have prolonged power outages. In this regard, we

are procuring generators to support the pumps when there is no power so that the water supply is not completely lost in those areas. In instances where we run out of diesel, we have always used water tankers.

One of the areas that has been a sore thumb since the local government elections of 2021 has been the issue of potholes, that is why as The People's Government we remain committed to accelerating the fixing of potholes on our roads and the maintenance of stormwater the drainage systems. We have already constructed **2.9km** of road and the nine stormwater drainage systems we were completed in June.

We have been scaling the whole region fixing potholes, monitoring road projects and opening stormwater systems. Just yesterday we reopened one of the major roads in Bedfordview, Nicol Road, which had to closed down because the bridge had collapsed and had become a threat to users.

We also opened the Reedville stormwater project. Almost a month ago, we reopened the Somhlolo taxi rank in Vosloorus and also unveiled a stormwater drainage system at the Thelle Mogoerane Hospital. In actual fact, a number of stormwater systems in Etwatwa, Wattville, Tamboville and various parts of KwaThema have been upgraded.

We have gone on to tar and rehabilitate a number of roads and build bus stops in many parts of the region including the ever-busy Rietfontein and Trichardt roads in Boksburg, parts of Kempton Park and various other roads in KwaThema extension 3,4 and 5 and Etwatwa.

Today the children of Thembisa can walk to school freely without fear of being washed away because we have provided them with a pedestrian bridge, and also can the community of Palmridge and Zonke.

Madam Speaker, today I can report without fear that the turbulent days of inconsistent waste removal services in the city, which the previous government could not deal with, are now over. I can safely tell you that our waste removal system is now back on track, and we have no backlogs. In actual fact, during our first 100 days in office, we have been able to clear over 100 illegal dumping sites in areas such as Daveyton, Wattville, Katlehong, Makause, Etwatwa and Thembisa. This remains work in progress.

We continue to take delivery of new compactors as we move with speed to replenish our ageing waste fleet to reduce dependency from private contractors/suppliers.

On environmental management, we were able to cut grass at all our cemeteries and open spaces, while service providers are now hard at work removing hyacinth from our water bodies. Already great progress can be seen at the Witfield Dam and other dams in the Springs and Benoni.

Fellow councillors, you will be glad to know that the one elephant in the room that we were also struggling to deal with, cremation, is now moving. I can report here today that after years of disfunction the People's Government has refurbished two existing cremators in Lala Ngoxolo Crematorium in Crystal Park. This will assist the city deal with the challenge of burial space as it opens up other burial methods for consideration by our people.

This speech I am delivering today may look like a bragging session but it is a service delivery report back to this council and our people. That is all it is. ***Siyasebenza.***

Today I want to remind this council that after years of no bursaries, the People's Government has resuscitated the bursary scheme. We did so because we understand that the fight against poverty and joblessness can only be won through education. We did this because we know that the future of Ekurhuleni is in the hands of young people. The MMC for Finance when delivering the Budget statement, pronounced that **R10 million** had been made available for this purpose – and so it is.

To add to our commitment to invest in the youth, we have just recently opened the internship programme to graduates so that we can expose them to the working environment and improve their chances of employment going forward. ***Masisebenzeni!***

The People's Government had also committed to improving the community beneficiation from the Springs Fresh Produce Market. We said it must provide more opportunity to emerging farmers and assist greatly in the fight against porvery. People may not understand that for us to achieve this, we need to put systems in place and fill critical positions with the right people for the purpose. We have moved with speed in this regard and a CEO for the Market has been appointed with a fresh mandate to make sure we realise our plans for the sake of our people.

Still on the economy, emerging contractors will be excited to learn that the **Vukuphile** programme, which empowered many in the past, has also been re-introduced albeit with a limited budget, but this is good and fresh start, and we can only improve it from here.

As we provide security of tenure to our people, we have managed to distribute 110 title deeds in 100 days. If this is not a clean record, then one wonders what is. In fact, still on the issue of housing, our re-blocking programme remains on track and soon we shall be giving more services to our people.

Madam Speaker, the issue of the signature event for the City remains a key target for us. While I cannot announce that it is finalized, I can tell the house that it is on track and will be realized soon. This is evident from the fact that a budget has been provided to the SHRAC department to kickstart the process.

It is still early days, but everyone can see that the People's Government remains on track and committed to service delivery. We are the first to admit certain challenges, especially in the areas of energy and water. We have received a number of petitions mainly on these two issues and we remain resolute to changing the status quo and bettering our offerings. We remain committed to winning this battle – and win it we shall.

As we move along, we are still firmly focused on improving service delivery and this we shall achieve by making sure that our backroom operations are fully operational. We are determined to fill all critical positions and equip our staff with the necessary skills to do much more.

In our efforts to improve safety and security we shall continue promoting our officers and empowering them to deal with all sorts of crime. Just recently we held a medal parade to honour those who have gone beyond the call of duty as a form of motivation and acknowledgement.

Our health system continues to provide for millions of our people and we are determined to ensure that more and more people get to rely on our facilities. Taking quality health care services closer to our people remains our utmost target.

Madam Speaker, as previously stated, The People's Government shall continue pursuing the following:

- **Unlocking Private Public Partnership Infrastructure projects;**
- **Infrastructure Investment;**
- **Pitching Hub for Business Investment;**
- **High Rise Human Settlement** near economic opportunities;
- **Integrated Public Transport** to ease the movement of goods and people;
and
- **International Convention Centre and City's Museum.**

In closing, - ***Isikhathi sokusebenza ses'fikile. Masisebenzeni!!!!***

City Manager, we trust you to marshal the team to work even harder like you have demonstrated in the past.

Together we can make this work.

I Thank You