



**ADDRESS BY THE SEDIBENG DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY EXECUTIVE MAYOR, COUNCILLOR MAHOLE SIMON MOFOKENG DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION OF THE SEDIBENG 2009 4<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL LUNCHEON CELEBRATION WITH THE VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS OF THE VAAL MASSACRES**

1<sup>st</sup> January 2009.

- Councillor Kedibone Mogotsi, Programme Director and Speaker of the Sedibeng District Municipality;
- Fellow councillors present;
- Most importantly, *Matlasipha*, and the Leadership of their organizations: amongst which is *Khulumani* – an organization that our Municipality is proud to be associated with;
- Officials from Sedibeng District Municipalities;

- Our entertainers and representatives of various media houses present;
- Comrades and colleagues.

I stand to greet and welcome each and every one of you to our 2009 4<sup>th</sup> annual celebratory luncheon meeting with the survivors and relatives of the victims of all the massacres that took place in our Region.

But I also want to use this opportunity to condemn in the strongest possible way the senseless killings which have erupted in the last few days in Israel and Palestine and which have already seen over 200 people dead. We cannot avoid noticing the similarity with our own history which gives us all the reasons to join hands with other rightful thinking people of the world to pray for peace and justice in Zimbabwe and in the Middle East.

Comrades and colleagues,

Our senior citizens deserve no less than honour and recognition for their selfless and patriotic contributions and sacrifices in the struggle to bring about freedom and democracy in South Africa.

For you have indeed endured incredibly many years of hardship under a monstrous rule, which it took you fierce struggles which were waged in Sharpeville, Boipatong and many other parts of our Country aimed at bringing about the infamous rule to its knees; a particular reason that serves as a stark reminder to the road we have travelled.

We come from a history which must be preserved for our next generations so that they too, can help to ensure that it never repeats itself and pass it over to the generations after. This will be a best tribute to our foremost icon, Comrade Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, who turned 90 years this year and is also counted amongst you as a senior citizen, and who will for many years to come be remembered for his famous speech that said we should ensure that never again in the history of our

beloved country that it should happen that no human being should suffer at the hands of another.

Madam Speaker,

Successes and challenges we encounter as individuals, families, clans, tribes, ethnic groups and nations are a mirror of who we are. As human beings, we have to strive to minimize the challenges in order to live better. Sedibeng District Municipality is driven by that determination.

Although things have been tough in 2008, we have fought and refused to be swayed from the mandate you bestowed on us, nor are we going to allow ourselves to be tempted into abandoning our course of struggle for which many of our parents, children, brothers and sisters, relatives and neighbours have paid for dearly with their own lives. Ours, is to continue on the road chosen for by the victims and survivors of Sebokeng, Evaton, September 3, Ratanda – a road leading to a land of equality, peace and justice.

Nothing for us without us; I am also inspired by the outcome of the meeting your leaders had with my Office, where you have made your voice clear and heard that you needed to be empowered to run your own businesses and to stand a chance to also benefit from tenders and other opportunities offered by government. As a government of the people, which is driven and based on their will, we are going to make sure and spare no energy to ensure that your wishes must find their expressions in our IDP and other plans for this year. We will also never tire from communicating these aspirations in our engagements with our Local Municipalities of Midvaal, Lesedi and Emfuleni, provincial and national governments.

Our task and responsibility in government is to make sure that the aspirations of those of our people and those who have lost limbs in our struggles like Mma Mabatha are adequately represented as were not in vain. Otherwise of freedom would be meaningless. Freedom will be relevant of the work of our public representatives in National, Provincial and Local government remain guided by the echoing pleads of the Sharpeville Six and Delmas Trialists.

It is also important that we also use this opportunity to apologize to our people for the failour of our journey to Namibia and Angola – a journey which is to offer us a platform to network and share experiences with other communities with similar history. Our officials will be working very hard this year, having learned from that experience, to make sure that we do not experience a repeat.

Our gathering today is to welcome 2009 by opening a key to the door leading to prosperity for our Municipality and the people of Sedibeng. The God of our Great Grandfathers and Great Grandmothers and our ancestors are with us in these trying times for Africans, who after many centuries of slavery, exploitation and oppression are beginning to re-discover their roots and identity.

In welcoming all of you, I invite you to enjoy a special treat, specially arranged for you. Whilst we know and understand this can never be enough as it cannot come closer to replacing lost lives; the 2009 4<sup>th</sup> annual celebrations, is just an indication of an unwavering commitment to an on-going struggle to preserve our history and heritage; and also one of the many initiatives intended to strengthen our relationship with the masses of our people and different stakeholders and interest

formations in Sedibeng. It is a painful but proud history, which we will continue to use as a referral point to guide us in our day-to-day work – as agents of change.

It is only through working in partnership with our people that we shall overcome against all odds.

Victory is certain!