



Keynote Address by the Sedibeng District Municipality Executive Mayor, Cllr. Mahole Simon Mofokeng on the occasion of the Sedibeng District Municipality Women Council Sitting held at the Council Chamber, 05 August 2009, in Vereeniging in Sedibeng

Executive Mayor of Emfuleni Local Municipality: Cllr. Assistance Mshudulu;

Executive Mayor of Lesedi Local Municipality: Cllr. Busi Modisakeng;

Executive Mayor of Midvaal Local Municipality: Cllr. Timothy Nast;

Sedibeng District Municipality Speaker: Cllr. Kedibone Mogotsi;

Emfuleni Local Municipality Speaker: Cllr. Greta Hlongwane;

Lesedi Local Municipality Speaker: Cllr. Maria Phala;

Midvaal Local Municipality Speaker: Cllr. Ron Smit;

Sedibeng District Municipality Chief Whip: Cllr. Aaron Makhubo;

Emfuleni Local Municipality Chief Whip: Cllr. Thulani Kunene;

Lesedi Local Municipality Chief Whip: Cllr. Sibongile Makhubu;

Midvaal Local Municipality Chief Whip: Cllr. Malcolm Hack

Honourable Members of the Mayoral Committees of the Sedibeng District Municipalities and our constituent municipalities;

Our distinguished guests;

Our distinguish women councillors;

People of Sedibeng;

Members of the press

I take great pride and honour in addressing the inaugural sitting of the Sedibeng Women Council. It is perhaps fitting that this Council is convened in the light of Polokwane Congress of the ruling party, the ANC's resolution that seeks to redress the patriarchy imposed on our society, a resolution that dictates the 50/50 gender split in the organs of state in its various levels. We hope that this first sitting of the Women Council shall serve to spearhead the move to the realization of this resolution.

The purpose and thrust of this sitting, Madam Speaker, seeks to place for our approval, our Gender Policy as the District Municipality. The relevant and most important features and overarching objectives of the Sedibeng District Municipality Gender Policy is **“The Mainstreaming of Gender in the District and local municipalities so that it is made an integral part of our projects, planning and implementation within parameters of Key Performance Areas (KPA's) for the District Municipality and its constituent municipalities”**

With this onerous task at hand Madam Speaker, we will be guided by our District Growth and Development Strategy and the Integrated

Development Plan to which this Gender Policy is aligned. The need for the Gender Policy is long overdue and finds its expression within the Growth and Development Strategy as well as the Integrated Development Plan in various forms and guises.

It would not be a fair reflection on our part to leave the Gender Policy in the form in which its expression is left to the discretion of those within our various councils to interpret according to their whims or in the light of what day of the week it was. We could not leave it to chance.

We take the Gender Issues seriously in our District. We are committed to redress the gender imbalances of the past, we will not be found wanting when called to account on Gender forums. It has come to the notice of my Office, the extensive and intensive consultative processes that preceded this proposed Gender Policy.

In the wake of the consultative process, interface had to include alignment with our Republic of South Africa's Constitution and the Bill of Rights, the Employment Equity Act of 1998, the Priority of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act of 2000, the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities on gender Issues as well the International Labour Organization's code of Good Practice in respect of gender in the work place as well as the Eight Principles of Gender Mainstreaming as South African Cabinet decision.

With the severe tests that our proposed Gender Policy had to go through Madam Speaker, I have no doubt that it will prove to the best

policy document yet to emerge out of our District, in the manner that the best Constitution in the world was signed on the hallowed ground of our District Municipality. The best things come to those who wait, it takes a baptism of fire to bring out the shine from gold in the stone. The process of consultation from the year 2008 proved to be such baptism. My pride stems from the shining beacon that this baptism has produced.

With the above principle in place, it is perhaps fitting and proper to look at where we are in respect of Gender Equity in respect of Sedibeng District Municipality even before the Gender Policy is tabled. Of the total 168 councillors in Sedibeng District Municipalities, 82 of them are women, we may not be far from Gender Equality, but viewed in the light of historical disadvantaging of women, we need to be seen to be empowering women. “Together we can do more” to improve on this status.

It is with the said statistics in mind that I am confident in this 2009 August Women Council Sitting at its inaugural sitting that gender parity will be attained soon.

Whist the Gender Policy is aligned to both the IDP and the GDS, I am convinced that this esteemed Women Council Sitting will go beyond policy formulation. It is my pride and joy to notice that concrete steps and powerful project plans are herein included. These are steps which give life and action to policy and thereby ensuring that this Council does not translate itself into a talk-shop.

It is with the above assertions in mind, that I commit my Office and the District Municipality to the following activities in support of the proposed Sedibeng District Municipality Gender Policy, as expressed in the SDBIP for my Office:

- Mainstreaming of issues relating to designated groups in general and women in particular through the increment of women who participate in Sedibeng District Municipality programmes;
- Increase the number of women trained who participate in ward committees;
- Increase the number of women who participate in Inter-Government Relations Forums;
- Increase the number of women participating in Council organized public functions including Izimbizo and council meetings;
- Foster a Vibrant Democracy by building a high level stakeholder relations and public engagement by holding regular stakeholder forums, sector based forums for women, with relevant ward committee representatives and the maintenance of stakeholder database;
- Develop and implement a number of key communication vehicles to the public, including Izimbizo and council meetings by taking council meetings to communities;

- Enhance participation of stakeholder in the implementation of the IDP through improved and sustained partnership with various stakeholders;
- Economic Empowerment of the women in the District;
- Skills development of women in the District

I hereby commit my Office and the District Municipality to these deliverables within the current financial year. I therefore take this opportunity to challenge the Women Council to interact with this commitment with a view to enhance our service delivery imperatives as they find expression in our SDBIP.

In conclusion Madam Speaker, I take this opportunity to wish you all very fruitful deliberations and engagements in this inaugural Sedibeng Women Council Sitting today.

Ke tlotla boleng ba lona ka hore basadi ke tau di mesana ele ka nnete.

Ke a leboha