



**Speaking Notes by the Sedibeng District Municipality Executive Mayor,
Cllr. Mahole Simon Mofokeng on the occasion of the 169th Ordinary
Mayoral Committee Meeting held in the Big Exco Room in the Mayor's
Parlour in Vereeniging on the 25th February 2010, in Sedibeng**

Fellow Councillors;

Senior Management Team

Officials

I take this opportunity to greet you all at this important gathering of our 169th Ordinary Mayoral Committee. This meeting comes at the time when preparations for the commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Sharpeville Massacre are at an advanced stage.

Our collective view is that these preparations must commensurate the 50th Anniversary, a Special Anniversary of the Sharpeville Massacre recalling that fateful day when unarmed protesters against the unjust and humiliating apartheid pass laws were mowed down by the apartheid forces in Sharpeville.

This is the period which will never descend our Region again in the life of many of us. A day which came to be popularly known as the Sharpeville Shootings.

You will recall that in terms of our previous Council sittings, we are planning a commemoration that is different from the previous ones and the briefings that I have been receiving thus far, indicate that we are moving towards that ideal situation in our Region.

We have decided together with our locals, provincial, national and other stakeholders that this Special Anniversary will this time around be celebrated and commemorated in a different style. This different style include many key aspects and we must ensure that we steadfastly work towards leaving a legacy behind in remembrance of our heroes and heroines

Among these key aspects if I may once again remind Mayco, are the following:

- The Night Vigil which will be conducted in a different manner from the previous ones;
- The Gala Dinner which we hope would be addressed by the Deputy State President and / or the Minister for Trade & Industry as this will in the main be targeting our business community in the Region and the launch of the Sedibeng Development Agency;

- The Human Rights Day which will be characterised by very memorable aspects in the form of:
 - The awarding of the current State President with the Freedom of Sedibeng and appointing the First Lady as the Patron for the Sedibeng Development Agency.

Colleagues, it was pleasant and satisfying when listening to the State of the Gauteng Province Address by Premier Nomvula Mokonyane last week, hearing her saying that we must use this day and other national commemorative days - Freedom Day, Youth Day, Heritage Day and the National Day of Reconciliation to forge national unity by commemorating them together as South Africans

This speaks directly to the resolution which we took in our previous Council sitting, emphasised by the Democratic Alliance when they called the Council sitting to commit itself to ensuring that this year's commemoration symbolises unity in action.

Working towards a successful and memorable commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Sharpeville Massacre must be a concerted effort by all of us.

While we outline the above as part of good news prepared for our Region, sad and disturbing developments are happening in our Region. These are developments that test our strength, collectivity and unity as the Sedibeng Mayoral Committee. The developments that emerged in Sharpeville, those that came to be known as ***service delivery protests and have spread to other parts of our Region.***

While we denounce the manner in which the protestors conducted themselves during these protests, resulting in other community members being arrested for theft and public violence, we must collectively look back at and ask a question as to whether we have done enough to prevent this protest from taking place.

As we prepare responses to their grievances, we must be honest to ourselves as we need to ensure that our communities know what may actually be happening. Some of you who may have seen the content of the Concerned Residents of Sharpeville's memorandum of grievances would agree with me when I say, it's the combination of service delivery issues cutting across the provincial, district and local government competencies

Therefore, we must continue to educate our people about the different roles played by the three spheres of government to avoid what is currently happening in our Region.

All these we must do to achieve the objectives of *“The Year of Working Together to Speed Up Effective Service to the People”* and *“The Year of Action”*.

Given the challenges that may have led to the current state of the affairs in this regard, I have committed myself to taking it upon my shoulders in ensuring that the Sharpeville Concerned residents received their responses in due course.

World Wetlands Month

This month we are celebrating the world wetlands month in the world. World Wetlands Day is being celebrated around the world today under the theme *“Wetlands, Biodiversity and Climate Change”*. This annual event marks the date of the signing of the Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971. It represents a unique opportunity to raise awareness about the importance of wetlands, particularly at this time when the world, including South Africa, is experiencing a change in global climate.

We will recall that until today, we enjoy the fruits of wetlands as they continue to offer great value for a variety of plants and animals which human beings depend on for their livelihood. The significance of this day is highlighted worldwide through a variety of activities which we must all observe in keeping with our commitment to protect wetlands against Climate Change

FIFA World Cup Preparations

Colleagues, you will recall that we undertook a tour across the potential countries which would be camping in our Region during and for the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup.

We are still working on the report which will be conveyed to you at the later stage

Journey of the living history

Colleagues, you will recall that few weeks ago, as per our commitment to ensuring that our survivors and victims get the sense of belonging, we took them to Cape Town to among others engage with other victims from the Langa Massacre to share experiences

The detailed report in this regard will be conveyed to you at the later stage

In conclusion, I wish you all successful deliberations and conclusions on the issues that are for discussion today.

I thank you,