



Address by the Sedibeng District Municipality Executive Mayor; Cllr Mahole Simon Mofokeng on the occasion of the Human Rights Memorial Lecture held in Sedibeng, on the 31st March 2011.

Programme Director;

Our Esteemed Partner, Vaal University of Technology;

Our mothers and guardians of Sedibeng;

Setjhaba sa Sedibeng;

Our Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

I bring you greetings from the Sedibeng District Municipality. It is as we come to the end of the month of March 2011, the month which defines who we are as Sedibeng District Municipality. The month in which 51 years ago, the community of Sharpeville stood up to say to the entire world: Enough is enough, Africans in particular and South Africans in general can no longer stand the separation of brother from brother.

This led to the massacre of our people which heralded the Sharpeville Massacre. This act of selflessness has bestowed on us the honour of

being the Cradle of Human Rights Struggles as well as the Constitutional home of South Africa.

Their contribution to the liberation of South Africa and the sacrifices you have made brings pride to the community of Sedibeng in particular and the South African nation in general. It is not an error of judgment that the 21st March is determined as the Human Rights Day in South Africa.

Programme Director, it is perhaps fitting to paint the picture of what Sedibeng District looked like 51 years ago. There was no Sebokeng at the time, Sharpeville was still in its formative stages. Some of the houses were still being built and the last of the people were being forcibly bused in from Top Location.

Evaton was beginning to assume some semblance of peace and stability, having had just gone through the harrowing Azikhwelwa bus strikes. The area was tense. Let us fast track to 1980. At the time, Boipatong only had 736 households, Bophelong had 948 households and the entire Sharpeville had 3 240 households. Zone 13 only had 3960 households, more households than the entire Sharpeville.

All of these houses including the entire Black townships were rented stock, with no electricity. No African was allowed to own houses in the townships then except the dreaded 99 year leasehold. No one was

allowed to make extensions to these houses except though paying for the 99 year leasehold.

At the time in 1980, there were weekly pass raids throughout the entire townships to root out people who did not qualify to be in the urban areas. People could not visit freely between Evaton and Sebokeng, not even between Sharpeville and Boipatong for a sleepover. To have a sleepover in Sharpeville if you were from Boipatong, you had to get permission from the Commissioner before you entered Sharpeville.

If for some reason you failed to do this, the family you visited in Sharpeville would be woken up in the middle of the night, and the house permit demanded. The entire family would be paraded in their nightclothes assuming they had any, father, mother, children and grandchildren and you included.

You would then be allowed into the house only after you had identified yourself through your date of birth which was registered in the permit, the adults were forced to bring out their passes and you the visitor without permit would be taken away,

summarily arrested, to spend a few weeks in jail. African life was highly criminalized. It was a great challenge to even think of yourself as human.

As if that was not enough, you had to be out of both Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark promptly at 18h00. If you were still in town at the time, you would be summarily locked up until your white boss came the following day to account for your being late in town at that time.

If being in town in the evening was a crime, go into town during the day to look for a job. Any white person could arrest you for being an idle African. You needed permission from the Department of Labour to prove that you were looking for a job.

If you thought that was the worst, you had only to look in the direction of a white woman in town, believe you me, your goose was fried. Any white man could just “Klap” you around, and arrest you for “**Staan and Kyk**”.

Now if you thought that the lack of personal rights was the worst, one had only to look at the disparities in service delivery. The entire Sharpeville was characterized by unbearable stench coming from the bucket system.

Once a week, migrant labourers who were housed in the Sharpeville hostel would come and fetch your night soil. This was euphemism for the bucketfuls of toilets and effluence. This was allowed to fester for the whole week, weekends included in your yard.

Any wonder then that black young men would urinate all over the place and spit after passing water. This was due in part to the stench that came from the toilet. In spite of all this, there were some light moments.

There were legendary migrant labourers who picked up the buckets here in Sharpeville. The most noteworthy was a proud old man called Boy Masaka, a very natty dresser out of his overalls, with stamina that would shame some of our long distance runners.

Evaton on the other hand, was a network of pit latrines and boreholes in every yard for drinking and cooking water. There were no street lights to speak of, let alone electricity in the houses. The entire area of Sedibeng was a Dark City of epic proportions. Taxis only made an appearance in the 1973. Then again, they were available and use by teachers and policemen during month end to cash their salaries at Volkskas Bank and United Building Society.

Tarred roads were a luxury in Sharpeville, Sebokeng and the entire Sedibeng. All the tarred roads led to and from the police station and the township clerk offices. Telephones were only available to the police, the principals and in very few cases to priests.

Luckily, Sharpeville and Boipatong had community halls, not so lucky was Evaton, Bophelong and Sebokeng. Sebokeng was only able to get a hall when it was incorporated into Qwaqwa.

Only Sharpeville had a swimming pool. Young aspirant swimmers had to travel by bus from as far as Evaton and Sebokeng during holidays to dip into the Sharpeville swimming pool. Any wonder then that despite our proximity to the river, we do not have a culture or history of water sports in Sedibeng.

Our 2010 FIFA World Cup offering, the George Thabe Stadium, was only grassed and turfed in 1971. To do that, all the primary schools in Sharpeville were closed on that day. All the learners had to walk to the Dhlomo Dam to carry blocks of turf under strict supervision of the teachers and police.

Walking from Vuka to Dhlomo Dam and back to the George Thabe Stadium, is easily a twenty kilometer walk. Today we can be proud of the state of the stadium as a result of the sacrifices of those early learners.

Take a ride in a bus to town one could see a stark difference of what was in the townships. The schools had rugby stadiums with immaculate lawns. The primary schools had all the equipments you could only envy. The only Africans allowed into these schools were the cleaners and gardeners,

jobs they did with everlasting pride. This was due in part to their proximity to the pride of white South Africa, the white children.

The white communities in Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark had bowling greens, swimming pools, rugby stadiums within shouting distance of each other, cricket pitches were all over the show, they had recreational park and access to the river front which was denied to all Africans.

This year's theme: **Working together to protect dignity for all**" is indicative of our commitment as government to redress the injustice of the past. We are doing this in honour of the sacrifices made by the community of Sedibeng.

Programme Director, allow me to show the impact of the Human Rights struggles of our people on service delivery and just about every facet of South African life. Just recently we have heard of the white community in the Westrand which was living in very bad situation. They had refused to take up the government's offer to free housing.

Their fear was that their children would be killed. For fifteen years they would not move. Just two weeks ago they agreed to move into the houses provided by the government. They will be allowed to be human again despite their refusal to be integrated into the human race.

Twenty-five years ago, the Vaal University of Technology was a lily-white institution. It was not even known by the students who lived here in the Vaal. Black students of technology had to be content with Mangosuthu Technicon in KZN.

Today, VUT is a small indication of a nation at peace with itself, happy in the knowledge that we are all human and our rights to education have nothing to do with the amount of melanin in our skins or the length or lack thereof of our noses.

The Black community which was denied access and ownership of houses, are today the proud owners of 2.5 million houses built since the dawn of democracy. Over 8 million people have access to running water. Pit latrines and bucket system is becoming a thing of the past. Electricity has been provided on a massive scale.

The difference between town and township can only be seen through the ages of the houses from town to township. Township houses are new and younger as well as brighter.

Programme Director, the face of South Africa has changed for the better. Jobs are created and have been created for all. Just recently we in Sedibeng District Municipality have embarked on the 100 Days Service Delivery Programme. Through this programme we undertook to provide

necessary services to our communities. We announced this programme on the 50th Anniversary of the Sharpeville Massacre last year.

It is through this programme that we were able to do the following:

Sharpeville Precincts Projects

On Sharpeville Phelindaba Cemetery

In our quest to preserve our heritage, in line with our commitment to “Our heroes, Our Legacy-Lest we forget” in tandem with our clarion call, “Together with our communities-A final push towards reclaiming our heritage” Sharpeville Phelindaba Cemetery is one of the projects that forms part of the 100 Days Service Delivery Programme.

This is the cemetery where the heroes and heroines of the Sharpeville Massacre have been laid to rest. This is our piece of the Heroes Acre, a tribute to the selfless action towards the liberation of our country South Africa.

This project had to be prioritized in view of the 50th Anniversary of the Sharpeville Massacre earlier this year. Sharpeville is and has been in the world focus for many of our struggles and the need for a fitting monument demanded an equally fitting tribute.

I have the distinct pleasure of reporting that substantial progress has been made by all the local sub-contractors to-date. Lekoa Construction has completed the erection of the walls. Koetsa Construction has made us proud by completing the paving of all the pathways they were allocated.

Majapere Construction was not to be outdone, as they too have completed the paving and pathways allotted to them. Hydro Precision is progressing well with the steel works and granite work.

Lephetesane Building Contractors is progressing as well as can be expected and will soon complete all the plumbing work. Horticulture Skydove JV which is engaged to do Landscaping will be the last to complete to beautify the project.

Sesi YTM Projects is hard at work to do the overall paving. All Site Health and Safety requirements are religiously observed and there has been no incident to be reported on site so far and we intend to keep it that way.

Of the total project cost of R 14 501 771.28, an amount paid to date stands at R5 637 288.00. This goes on to show that proper financial and project management policies are in place thereby ensuring that we will not have a scenario of money running out long before the projects are completed.

On Exhibition Centre in Sharpeville

This project is now complete and bears testimony to the gallant efforts and sacrifices of our heroes and heroines of Sedibeng.

On Sharpeville Hall

The project cost for this project is R 13 274 01.81. There are two phases to this project, namely training and construction.

On Construction

The contractor has been appointed and has signed the letter of acceptance. The site was handed over to the service provider on 27 August 2010. The project time frame is nine months and the projects are expected to be completed in May 2011.

On Mitta Molete's House

One of the victims of the Boipatong Massacre was Mitta Molete. She was rendered disabled as a young child during the attacks. The house she was living in made it near impossible to commandeer her wheelchair as she carried her day to day chores.

To that end, the Sedibeng District Municipality took a resolution to extend her home to make her life a little better. To that end, the extension and rebuilding of her house formed part of the projects for the 100 Days Service Delivery Programme.

The projected date of completion was set for the 30th September 2010. A total of nine jobs were created including two youths. I am happy to announce that the house is now complete and was handed to the family.

I know that the Molete Family are enjoying the new living space which has greatly improve the quality of life for Mitta as it improved her mobility, access and her ability to carry out her chores.

On Construction of Evaton Pedestrian Sidewalks

Before taking you through project by project in this regard, I am tempted to hastily report that the Evaton Township as the oldest township in Sedibeng District Municipality has received a much needed facelift as a result of the 100 Days Service Delivery Programme.

Avondale Road

A local contractor, Ke A Dira Construction was appointed to the tune of R 1 699 689.06 to pave both sides of the street whose length is 2 630m.

They have to put up 1.2 m wide paving and kerbing. The project is now complete.

Boundary Road

A local contractor Africon Moon Trading 33 was appointed to the tune of R 1 792 448.79 to pave both sides of the street whose length is 2 480m. They have to put up 1.2 m wide paving and kerbing.

Easton Road Phase 01

A local contractor was appointed to the tune of R 1 632 652.95 to pave both sides of the street whose length is 2 185m. They have to put up 1.2 m wide paving and kerbing. The project was started on the 16th August 2010 and finished early this year.

Easton Road Phase 02

A local contractors were appointed to the tune of R 1 538 189.00 to pave both sides of the street whose length is 2 185m. They have to put up 1.2 m wide paving and kerbing. The project was started on the 16th August 2010 and the project is complete.

Hamilton Road

A local contractor was appointed to the tune of R 2 635 290.75 to pave both sides of the street whose length is 2 160m. They have to put up 1.2 m wide paving and kerb-stones. The project was started on the 16th August 2010 and was completed on the 16th February 2011.

Sterling Road

A local contractor was appointed to the tune of R 1 901 413.87 to pave both sides of the street whose length is 2 550m. They have to put up 1.2 m wide paving and kerbs. The project is complete.

Togo Road

A local contractor was appointed to the tune of R 1 517 911.80 to pave both sides of the street whose length is 2 185m. They have to put up 1.2 m wide paving and kerbs. The completion of this project has seen to the facelift of the area.

On Union Road

A local contractor was appointed to the tune of R 2 790 800.54 to pave both sides of the street whose length is 2 750m. They have to put up 1.2

m wide paving and kerbs. The project has created 53 much needed jobs in the area with 30 youth and twelve women as part of the employee contingent. The project is currently complete.

On Sharpeville Craft Hub

The Sharpeville Police Station, from which the shots that led to the Sharpeville Massacre 50 years ago, has been turned into a Hub of Reconciliation. In pursuit of reclaiming our heritage, the police station has been converted into a Craft Hub.

A local contractor was appointed to the tune of R 1 300 000.00 to renovate the building. Renovations for phase 1 and 2 were completed in August this year.

On CCVTV Heritage and Sports Precincts

In preparation for the 2010 FIFA World Cup, targeting a crime-free Sedibeng District Municipality, with an aim to provide a meaningful Sedibeng Experience for the tournament and beyond, we went out of our way to develop mechanisms to ensure community safety.

To that end, we appointed a local contractor to the tune of R 35 900 714.44 to install Closed Circuit Television Cameras at strategic places throughout Sebokeng, Evaton and Sharpeville.

31 sustainable jobs were created in view of the fact that the contract to install and maintain stretches up to the year 2012. Another set of CCTV were installed at the Vereeniging Licensing Centre and the Vanderbijlpark Licensing Centre to the tune of R 1 199 614.02.

This was done to ensure corruption free operations at these centers. Not to be outdone and left behind, CCTV were also installed at the Meyerton and Heidelberg Licensing Centers to the tune of R 1 391 712.00 awarded to a local contractor.

This was money well spent as there was not a single act of mischief and crime in all these Primary Viewing Areas.

The cameras continue to provide a cutting edge solution to crime fighting and reduction of crime where they have been installed.

On Vuka Cemetery

The Vuka Cemetery in Sharpeville is the resting place of the victims of the Boipatong Massacre which led to the date being set for the first

Democratic Elections in this country. To that end, in pursuit to our commitment to our rallying call “Our Heroes, Our Legacy-Lest we Forget”, this historic real estate formed part of the 100 Days service Delivery Programme.

The project was completed on time and the tombstones were handed back to the families officially during the 17th June Commemoration of the Boipatong Massacre.

On Constitution Walk

The Constitution Walk Project is still to be launched as we are waiting for the National Treasury to release the funding. As soon as the funding is released, we can without doubt expect dust to rising as work will begin in earnest.

Apart from the great work which was done only in 100 Days, the entire Sedibeng is a beautiful place to raise your children, to foster the development of the nation through such institutions of higher learning as the Vaal University of Technology and others.

My making mention of the developments through the 100 Days Service Delivery Projects was intended to show that whereas the only time Africans were part of the projects of this nature in the past, they could only

have been labourers and not contractors. All the work in the township and everywhere else was reserved for whites only.

Thank you!