

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF
SEDIBENG DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY CLLR. MAHOLE
SIMON MOFOKENG AT THE OCCASION OF THE 86TH
COUNCIL SITTING, COUNCIL CHAMBER**

29 OCTOBER 2015

Madam Speaker of the Sedibeng District Council,

Madam Chief Whip and Members of the Mayoral Committee of the
Sedibeng District Municipality,

Fellow Councillors,

Our distinguished guests and the people of Sedibeng.

Madam Speaker, it is with great honour to stand here and address the members of this progressive Council of the Sedibeng District Municipality. Collectively, as a Council we built our reputation by continuously scooping great awards and achievements. I will make reference to this again later in my address.

Our constituent municipalities must really take stock from their District Municipality in order to deliver quality services to the people of Sedibeng.

Let me at this point remind this Council that on the 27th October the people of South Africa celebrated the birthday of our late giant, ANC President Oliver Reginald Tambo, as well as that of the late Jabulani Mzala Nxumalo, an ANC cadre and one of the finest thinkers and revolutionaries of our times. I have shared my birthday with the Gauteng Provincial Chairperson, Comrade Paul Mashatile which was celebrated on the 21st October and I am also aware that our Speaker, Mme Busisiwe Modisakeng will be celebrating hers on the 30th October.

As I am slowly recovering from a revolutionary back operation, I also wish to thank colleagues in the Mayoral Committee who held in the fort in my absence – in a true sign of collective leadership in action. I am slowly recovering and soon I will be ready for many tasks as will be decided by the Movement which I am serving and is responsible for my deployment.

We just emerged from the 4th National General Council of the African National Congress – a people’s assembly indeed, which declared for an intensification and acceleration of the struggle for the socio-economic liberation of all our people.

This is a critical review of the hard work towards the realisation of the vision as it is enshrined in the Freedom Charter. The opposition and many organizations envy the ANC because of its consistency of its policies and traditions.

It is because of this consistency that we welcome the announcement by President Zuma that there will be no increase in university fees in the 2016 academic year.

This decision is in line with the vision of the Freedom Charter and will bring the much-needed monetary relief, especially to the poor, working class and lower middle class families with university students. On the 60th anniversary of the Freedom Charter, we must ensure that the doors of learning and culture are opened to all.

Madam Speaker, there are still some party leaders who still think the apartheid government was better off than our democratic government. This cannot be correct. One of the world revered and an ANC leader, the late Dr. Nelson Mandela clearly declared that this country will never experience any oppression, either from the minority or from the majority. As leaders, it is incumbent upon us to ensure that his dream is realized.

Madam Speaker, this Council Sitting is convened while the African National Congress has made decisions to strengthen governance in our region. I have no doubt that these decisions, good as they are; will be exposed and subjected to different interpretations.

However, take it from the horse's mouth as I confine to you that these decisions are good for the future of the people of Sedibeng. If I am to put them into correct context, this is just the beginning of a process to put building blocks to a stronger Regional Authority which will see us to a Metro.

One of the decisions which have been taken is for me to handover the position of the Executive Mayor of the Sedibeng District Municipality and to ascend the position of the Executive Mayor of the Emfuleni Local Municipality.

We may be aware of the current situation regarding matters of governance in the Emfuleni Local Municipality which calls for urgent intervention. The ANC saw it fitting that I, and some of the members of this progressive Council, go and deliver on the very mandate of strengthening one of the biggest local municipalities in the country. The recently introduced War Room or Ntirisano as it is popularly known is yet another prove of how serious the ANC government considers our region.

The Gauteng Government has stationed in a two-day visit which ends today targeting the Emfuleni area.

Comrades and colleagues, I want to take a few moments to reflect on just how well you have performed as this collective by listing just some of our awards and accolades;

- Women's month Trophy 2012;
- The award by the late Minister Sicelo Shiceka bestowing Sedibeng District Municipality with the title of "Ambassador of Operation Clean Audit". It was a title that we have lived up to;
- Our innovative SODA's and Mayoral Awards since 2011, that included live broadcasts to satellite venues, continues to inspire other Municipalities and Provincial and National Departments;
- Several 'Clean Audit' Awards from CoGTA, the AG, SALGA and IMFO for our Clean Audit for 2012/2013;

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- The Community Safety IGR structure, namely; Community Safety Forum is recognized as the most effective in Gauteng whereby other municipalities and metros often visit SDM for acquisition of best practice model towards the sustainability of this forum. This is now known for having contributed to the reduction of new HIV infections from 1.9% to 1.7%;
- We are also the bearer of the Certificate of the Centre of Excellence for Gender Mainstreaming by Gender Links.
- We pride ourselves to be the first ever Municipality to establish a comprehensive Initiation Schools By-Law.
- We also pride ourselves as a holder of PMR Africa Golden Arrow 2012 Local Government Initiatives certificate.

It is as a result that earlier on I referred to being confident in leaving behind a much sustained municipality with great leaders and accolades and a culture of attaining clean audits. For example,

we have just been bestowed an award for the Second Run up for the Best Attending Municipality to SALGA Gauteng Provincial Working Group in 2014/15.

We do not just attend but we contribute vigorously in shaping the future of South Africa as the region of Sedibeng. This qualifies the above that I have just mentioned and I trust that you will continue to scoop a lot more.

I will always remember and get inspired by these achievements which we must now import to Emfuleni. Hard work pays and please do continue with that. The Emfuleni Local Municipality is around the corner. In simple terms, we are still together. All what is needed is for you to continue to exercise your role as the coordinating structure.

I enjoyed my working relations with the opposition. I will not forget the robust engagement we had in developing the region of Sedibeng. A democratic government without an external oversight may not function well. I believe that the new team; the PMT-led by

one of our stalwarts, Comrade Mshudulu will keep the fires burning and legacy alive.

Madam Speaker, admittedly, the campaign for accessible education is far from over. On this note, I once again wish the Class of 2015 the best of luck on the final examinations. As we approach the festive season, we must encourage our people not to be reckless on the road.

Madam Speaker, as I conclude, let me join many in sending our deepest condolences to the following people:

Reverend Jesse Jackson's mother, Helen Burns Jackson who passed-on on the 9th September 2015 at the age of 91. Our heartfelt condolences go to the Reverend Jesse Jackson's family during this painful time. Reverend Jesse Jackson has a long standing commitment to the people of South Africa and became a staunch opposition to apartheid.

Comrade Reggie Vandeyar passed-on on the 17th September 2015 at the age of 84. Comrade Reggie became an activist at a tender age which saw him rise in the ranks of the ANC led formations to being in leadership.

Cuban Revolutionary Jorge Risquet Valdes-Saldana who passed-on on the 28th September 2016 in Havana, Cuba at the age of 85 was a founder member of the Communist Party of Cuba, a veteran of the Sierra Maestra and Commander of the Patrice Lumumba Internationalist Battalion in Congo Brazzaville.

Sammy "Vho-Mushasha" Moeti passed-on on the 13th October 2015. He played the character of Vho-Mushasha on Muvhango and also acted in the movie Elelwani as Madwara. May the souls and those fallen heroes and heroines and of many of our residents rest in peace.

Madam Speaker and Madam Chief Whip, this Council will reconvene again in the next few days to reconstitute itself with new leadership. My best wishes to the incoming leadership.

As I take leave, I want to ensure that we do not hamper the ongoing work of this Municipality. Handover reports must be developed, whatever can be expedited must be concluded, the incoming team must take over the baton with smoothness and without struggle.

Madam Speaker, Madam Chief Whip and fellow councilors,
for the last time as the Executive Mayor of this District Municipality,
I now present my reports.

I thank you.