EXECUTIVE MAYOR, CLLR BUSISIWE MODISAKENG OF SEDIBENG DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

30 MAY 2019

CITY HALL, VEREENIGING

Honourable Chairperson of Council,

Honourable Members of National Parliament, Provincial Legislature

Speakers of the local Councils,

Honourable Chief Whip,

Honourable Executive Mayors of our local municipalities,

\* Cllr Gift Moerane,

\* Cllr Bongani Baloyi,

\* Cllr Lerato Maloka,

Members of the Mayoral Committees;

Speakers,

Chief Whips of the Local Councils,

Honourable Members of Council,

Leaders of political parties, alliance partners, faith-based organisations,

Historians, Academia

Distinguished guests, investors and business women and men

Delegates from various sectors of our community,

People of Sebokeng, Sicelo, Ratanda, Devon, Fischuil, Mamello and Sonderwater

Honourable Speaker,

I believe that we all deserve a special thunderous applause for participating in the sixth constitutional democratic General election.

Look to your neighbour and ask him “Did you make the right thing?”

Did you vote?

And say thank you for the love of your country.

Indeed, different people from all walks of life, from all corners of our mother land stood in queues on the 8th of May to cast their vote.

Indeed, honourable members – the people of Sedibeng did go out in numbers to the polls and they have made their voice heard in the highly contested elections since the dawn of our democracy in 1994.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This year on the 27th of April marked 25 years of democracy in our country and it was a year of business unusual based on the fact that all South Africans had to choose their own government for the 6 sixth administration.

Indeed, as we are just coming from the most hotly contested polls in post-Apartheid South Africa with a record of 48 political parties contesting elections, let it be noted that the run up to the polls up until the end has been smooth despite some minor challenges identified and this was emphasised by the declaration made by SADC Observation Mission in the preliminary statement which observed that the 2019 National and Provincial Elections were conducted in an orderly and professional manner and within the requirements of the legal framework, in accordance with revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections.

 I want to express my heartfelt thanks to all the voters, they've once again understood that voting keeps nations and governmental systems working, mainly because the purpose of every government is to develop and implement various policies for the benefit of its citizens.

It has been encouraging to meet so many determined responsible citizens of different generations including exciting first-time voters who went all out to exercise their democratic right.

We are confident that the newly elected President of the Republic of South Africa, his Excellency Honourable Cyril Ramaphosa is going to work tirelessly on behalf of all citizens to address challenges identified, secure lasting and meaningful improvements to the quality of life because that's what characterises the period of a NEW DAWN to restore people's confidence through implementation of the much needed, improved service delivery and zero tolerance to corruption.

Our region is alive and rose to the occasion at above 50% participation during the election.

Let me take this time and congratulate all citizens that have answered to the call “Thuma Mina” to serve in our National Parliament and Provincial Legislature. Our own Council celebrates and congratulates our former madam Speaker honourable Melina Gomba and councillor Hoffman who are now a members of parliament.

We thank them for their service and contribution to the people.

We wish them well for their new responsibilities to all South Africans and we say to our National and Provincial Members “don't forget to priorities your people, to defeat triple challenges, and always be ready to serve with integrity and selflessness”.

Honourable Speaker, Chief Whip of Council

Let me take this opportunity to congratulate the African National Congress (ANC) for its success in retaining the National and Provincial majority vote, particularly the economic hub of South Africa – Gauteng Province. Indeed, we will continue to work with all spheres of government and our communities in order “to grow South Africa together”.

Distinguished guests,

Let us all acknowledge and applaud a stellar work done by our Chapter 9 institution, the “Electoral Commission of South Africa” for staging a free, fair and safe election.

In reflection of the General Election, we are to continue to deepen our democratic culture of voting in our families and communities, more importantly to ensure that many of our young people get registered to vote on time and effectively participate in the 2021 local government elections.

Ladies and gentleman

Through our youth services in Sedibeng District, local municipalities in partnership with SETAs, we've provided several skills development through expanded public works programs, entrepreneurial skills thereby encouraging them to form corporatives, we are also intending to create a partnership with all our institutions of higher learning in the Vaal even beyond in order to provide more required skills to young people in line with industrial requirements for the purpose of job creation.

We conducted several workshops, awareness campaigns to educate our young people about the dangers of drugs, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, with the aim of dealing with identified social illnesses in our communities.

 The Youth scholar development programme initiative by the Department of Basic Education in partnership with Sedibeng licensing services has assisted 328 learners to test for their learners driving licences of which only 172 were able to pass their tests, the department of basic education indicated that they are considering an extension of the project.

It was our founding father, stalwart Oliver Tambo who said, open quote:

“A country, a movement, a person that does not value its youth and children does not deserve its future”. Close quote.

While today we have fully subsidised government bursaries, let us not forget its true cost, we cannot look past the interest of young people, a quick reminder is the hash tag (# Fees Must Fall movement) where they've demonstrated power and influence to fight for what they believe in. This campaign raised uncomfortable questions on the transformation of higher learning institutions; we as Sedibeng say we hear you and we shall work tirelessly with the department of education both national and provincial to ensure that we reach an amicable solution.

This year as usual we celebrated International Women's Day in March and Mother's Day on the 12th, with its unique theme “#balance for better” aimed at gender equality, greater awareness of discrimination and a celebration of women achievements. Sedibeng has a standing Gender Based Violence and LGBTQ Awareness programme with various stakeholders such SAPS and Correctional Services to name a few.

Indeed, we must always honour all the women who continue to play an effective role in society; it really signifies the Southern Sotho idiom “Mme o tshwarathipa ka bohaleng”

“Wathint' Abafazi Wathint' Imbokoto”

“Wathint' Imbokoto Wathint' Abafazi”

Going towards the youth month all of us must utter these words as a pledge to grow South Africa with its future, our youth, our children, our young women, our future in doing so to deliberate on solutions that will reduce huge numbers of unemployed young people by transforming them into economic contributors.

All sectors of our community, the born frees generation the Ys and Z, joined hands in commemorating the twenty fifth (25th) year of democracy, the celebration of the following,

\* the 59th Sharpeville Massacre

\* pledge towards fighting the legacy of racism and economic inequality;

\* renew loyalty to the country and commitment to the future of our communities;

Distinguished guests,

In our current democratic era, we still face a number of challenges in our country and region.

\* Unemployment and poverty remains bleak,

\* where the land question still remains skewed in favour of minority than the dispossessed;

\* Our region struggles to meet the desired demand of jobs for young women and youth;

\* Where Gender-based violence is a phenomenon deeply rooted in gender inequality

\* Proper documentation such as Ids and birth certificates, is a severe issue within the Sedibeng region, we further encourage to visit home affairs offices for the collection of their identity documents.

\* noting that economic physical assets are skewed across racial lines; however strides are being made towards re-building and revitalising economic transformation

Our very own, two-time gold Olympic Medalist – Mokgadi Caster Semenya continues to face gender discrimination from the International Association of Athletics Federation.

In the same vein, let us congratulate Sarah Khumalo – the first black South African woman to conquer Mount Everest.

Indeed, with experience of both success and wins of the 25 years of democracy, we are to whole heartily pledge to fight tooth and nail the remnants of racism and economic injustice.

We are going to renew our loyalty “working together in growing a capable and developmental district municipality” #it’s in your hands

Honourable Members, People of Sedibeng

\* Let us unite and make the next 25 years of democracy - years of no state capture, but years of potential and opportunity for our people

\* Let us unlock corridors of powers and spaces of opportunities to grow and make our region – a place to live, work and play

\* Let us follow and embrace the wisdom of our first black female fighter pilot, Major Mandisa Nomcebo Mfeka, open quote

“Where you come from doesn't determine your capacity”

Ladies and gentlemen

Early January and December last year we have experienced flooding in Sebokeng, Evaton and other surrounding areas, let me take this opportunity to commend the spirit of Ubuntu and bathopele principle from all sectors of society including our disaster management services for their rescue efforts and responding to the call of duty.

Re ya leboha! Masibonge!

We recently experienced a tragic collapse of a walkway at Hoerskool Driehoek in Vanderbijlpark where 4 learners lost their lives and 20 others got injured. Due to the intervention by the Gauteng MEC Education, the walkway was re-built.

I want to thank our community, business, families and government for their swift, positive contribution during that time of pain and loss.

Under Health and Safety we want to make sure that we continue to have a healthy and safe workplace environment for the benefit of the employees and the public. Our Occupational Health and Safety department adheres to the regulations and standards with the purpose of ensuring that the workplace is free of hazards and risks; for the past two financial years Sedibeng Municipality workplace has had no disabling injury.

Honourable Executive Mayors

Two years ago, we had a much-needed partnership with SANTAM to build, increase our capacity to deal with natural disasters such as flooding and fire related incidents.

Today, I am pleased to share with the community that our partnership until thus far has been fruitful. Working together with SANTAM we were able to:

\* Train ninety-six (96) Early Childhood Development practitioners in basic Disaster Management, First Aid and Basic Fire Fighting courses

\* Installed one thousand (1000) smoke alarms for informal settlements in Lesedi (Ratanda and Kwa Zenzele)

\* In Emfuleni Local Municipality, we have installed Smoke alarms in homes for the aged, disabled and for the blind.

\* SANTAM have spent five hundred and thirty thousand, seven hundred eighty-two rands and fifty cents (R530 782.50) in training for our local Fire Fighting Services.

The programme has benefitted thirty (30) Fire Instructors, thirty (30) Fire Operations and forty (40) Confined space rescue.

\* We continue to work with SANTAM in various programs such as Winter Awareness Campaigns, Commemoration of the International Day for Disaster Risk to name but a few.

Ladies and gentlemen;

Disasters can be life changing to a certain extent, but can also destroy livelihoods hence this partnership becomes helpful during difficult times when our people are in need of much needed assistance.

In the next financial year, we will continue training and preparing our communities together with SANTAM to be disaster ready. We will:

\* Review Sedibeng Disaster Management Plan (including Risk Assessment & Mapping)

\*We will Procure and Install Smoke alarms for Informal settlements in Emfuleni Local Municipality

\*We will obtain Response and Recovery equipment (procurement of a drone for Environmental/scene scanning and assessment)

Honourable Speaker, Community leaders, Health Activists

We are part and parcel of the 90 – 90 – 90 strategy in dealing with the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Whereby every government sphere and civil society sector want to ensure that in 2020,

\* 90% of people living with HIV and Tuberculosis will know their status,

\* 90% of people who know their Tuberculosis/ HIV-positive status will be accessing treatment and 90% of people on treatment will have suppressed viral loads

\* And in South Africa we have added to this target the treatment of our silent killer “Tuberculosis”.

Since 2012 to 2016, our region has witnessed an increase of a number of people living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), on the other side the number of AIDS deaths have declined across the region.

Ladies and gentlemen, Survivors and Activists

Let us unite and make the next 25 years of democracy, a year of success in fighting the scourge of Tuberculosis, HIV & AIDS.

Our programme to fight against this epidemic, together with civil society, business and government, in 2018/19 we have:

\* Trained 163 females and 25 males as ward-based educators.

\* We have reached out to two hundred and ninety-six thousand households and four hundred and nine thousand.

\* We have created employment opportunities for 200 ward based educators and have spend over 4 million in all our Local Municipalities

Honourable Members

These milestones in HIV/AIDS, TB and STI were achieved with Gauteng AIDS Secretariat, our global funded partners ANOVA Health and NACOSA.

Through such initiatives, learners with behavioural challenges are offered one on one counselling. Those with severe challenges are referred to DSD for diversion. So far, there has been a decline in teenage pregnancy in the Sedibeng region due to an intensive support and intervention programme by the department of education. In a addition 24 775 (twenty four thousand seven hundred and seventy five) vulnerable households receive psycho-social support services.

We continue to appeal to all sectors of our society to play their role in our fight against HIV and AIDS.

Our success is in your hands, each and every one of us #it’s in your hands.

Let us unite and continue to respond to the call and say “Thuma Mina” and reach our target 90 – 90 – 90.

I am pleased to announce today, that we have made progress in Sedibeng and have established a Civil Society Forum in 2018.

The work of the Forum is to ensure that the plans of combating HIV/ AIDS and TB address the real needs and challenges on the ground and increase district-level saturation of programs to levels that will result in HIV & TB epidemic control.

People of Evaton, Sicelo and Ratanda

We will continue our commitment and pledge towards creating an HIV&AIDS free generation by improving the quality of care by supplementing and layering packages for better health care.

The year 2019/20 financial year we will work diligently with all partners, civil society and we have budgeted eight million seven hundred and sixty-nine thousand rands (R 8,769,000).

In 2016, the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities suspended all initiation school activities.

We stand and recommend the work of our traditional and community leaders, South African Police Services rescued six (6) missing children from the Free State in December.

In Ratanda, the police managed to close an illegal initiation school and rescued 17 abducted youth. I appeal to all parents, civil society and community leaders to uphold the rule of law and let us protect the rights of our children and work together with the Commission and forums in place.

Mothers, fathers, teachers and distinguished guests

In 2018, the University of Cape Town released a report “South African Child Gauge (gage)” states that it is in our hands to provide and support our children's development.

It calls on families and the state to do work together in lobbying and realising the needs and rights of our children and to have a long-term view.

“In our children lies scholars, teachers, nurses, politicians, business people, workers and parents”.

Chair

Government is working on realising our children's rights in various fronts.

We applaud and stand together with our 6th Parliament President, Cyril Ramaphosa in prioritising full investment in Early Childhood Development (ECD) and to ensure that we prepare our children for the 4th Industrial Revolution. We call on all practitioners in our ECD sector to work with our Provincial government and municipalities to ensure we apply the new skills and attitudes we have acquired in new common standards for ECD practitioners. We have recently launched an ECD and Day Care Centre for elderly people in Bophelong in partnership with the Gauteng MEC of Health and Social Development.

Our Early Childhood Development Centre technical team is functional and we have more than hundred children in support by Social Development. Let me extend my sincere gratitude for all non-profit organisations and businesses that continues to fight and protect the rights of our children to learn to read, count, write and have a meal.

Let us continue to create a safe and secure family setting for our young boys and girls.

Clergymen and women, business people and government leaders

We need to be united in creating a safe, inclusive space and skills development and job opportunities for our men and women with disabilities.

During our IDP outreach, we have received welcomed submissions that we are not doing enough to promote and protect their social and economic rights as equal and rightful members of our region.

In 2018 we held People with Disability Dialogue and have the new committee for People with Disability.

Let us be united and ensure to work together, acknowledge, promote and protect their dignity in all we do and grow our region by ensuring that we employ persons with disabilities and provide necessary requirements to meet their needs.

Every year we ensure that our elderly are acknowledged, supported and celebrated by continuously contributing in raising our families and creating an inclusive society and we don't discriminate.

Distinguished guests,

The United Nations Report reminded me that “our real asset to develop and build our society rests in our institutions – schools, churches, ECDs, universities and families and its people”.

On that note, I welcome the provincial government for their vision and leading the curve to create “smart schools” and “schools of specialisation” in the entire Gauteng.

We are thankful of your contribution former MEC Mr Panyasa Lesufi.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Of course, I did lobby for a specialisation school in agriculture, Mohloli Secondary School in Sharpeville have been launched as a School of Specialisation with focus on Maritime Studies with Maritime Economics and Nautical Sciences.

I call on all parents, SGB, learners and the community to promote and protect our community assets to develop our children.

I will continue to lobby for specialisation of agriculture, because our South Corridor focuses on water and agricultural economy as game changers.

Let me take this opportunity to remind caregivers and parents to register our children online for Grade 1 and 8 for 2020 school year today.

Indeed, the 4th Industrial revolution is here.

Honourable Councillors, Citizens of Sedibeng

During his inaugural address, President Ramaphosa reminded us about the past 25 years of democracy; open quote

“In the passage of that time, our land has known both seasons of plenty and times of scarcity.

Our people have felt the warm embrace of liberty.

They have rejoiced at the affirmation of their essential and equal humanity.

They have found shelter and sustenance.

They have found opportunity and purpose.” Close quote.

When I listened to those words, it reminded me of our region – that we have been having a long season of scarcity- rising levels of unemployment, particularly our young people and women at large.

Added to unemployment is low income and poverty levels.

I stand here before you, encouraged that through this season of scarcity – you have held your season of plenty in hope and belief that Sedibeng region can be great. Sedibeng District Municipalities and its locals can feed, clothe and liberate her children, men and women's talents and potential.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The next 25 years of democracy we will built on a strong and deep foundation of our Growth and Development Strategy focusing at

\* Institutional capacity development

\* Facilitation of spatial structural change, nodal and corridor development

\* Regional infrastructural development which includes open wi-fi for job seekers.

\* Sectoral support and development for

• Manufacturing and re-industrialization

• Agriculture and rural development, and

• Tourism development and environmental management

\* Township social and economic development

\* Maximize the impact of tertiary higher education

\* Facilitation of business support and development

Madam Speaker,

The next 25 years of our democracy, we have to work hand in glove with our communities, investors, North West University – Vaal Campus, Vaal University of Technology, Sedibeng TVET, creatives, all government spheres to deliver years of unity, renewal and capture the talents and potential of our region. It is in our hands to GROW Sedibeng region.

Our Gauteng Provincial government will continue to work with our local municipalities in strengthening our capacity to service our people.

\* Emfuleni Local Municipality and Lesedi Local Municipality will continue to update and maintain their Infrastructure Service Delivery Asset Register at one million-rand R1 000 000 each;

\* Lesedi Local Municipality will implement poverty alleviation programme, the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) amounting to not less than one million rand (R1 000 000);

Honourable Councillors, People of Sedibeng,

In his last fifth (5) Administration's State of the Province Address, Premier of Gauteng, Honourable Makhura acknowledged the unsustainable revenue base of Sedibeng and West Rand district municipalities. This challenge of declining equitable share from the National Government has been with our district for the past 7 years. We encourage our communities to continue to pay their rates and taxes (Masakhane) so that we are in a position to meet service delivery needs.

We look forward and we will continue lobbying the Provincial and National Government for a new funding model.

Chair

Having said that let me take this opportunity to present the Integrated Development Plan / Budget for 2019/20. Our district will receive equitable share from national government amounting to:

\* two hundred and sixty-eight million six hundred and twenty-six thousand rands (R268, 626,000) and others transfers refers to

\* Local government Financial Grant to the tune of one million rand (R1,000,000);

\* EPWP to the tune of one million one hundred and seventy-three thousand rands (R1,173,000);

\* Water Services Infrastructure Grant amounting to fifteen million rands (R15,000,000);

\* Rural Roads Asset Management Systems Grant to the tune of two million five hundred eighty thousand rands (R2,580,000);

The provincial government transfers will amount to:

\* eleven million two hundred and eighty-four thousand rands

(R11, 284,000) therefore, our government transfers and subsidies to the tune of two hundred and

ninety-nine million six hundred and sixty-three thousand rands (R299,663,000)

People of Sedibeng,

The district municipality have estimated total operating revenue amounting to

\* four hundred and three million nine hundred and thirty-three thousand rands (R403,933,000); Whereas our total estimated expenditure is

\* four hundred and

twenty-nine million and sixty-two thousand three hundred and forty-one (R429,062,341), of which 72.6% is for employee and councillor related costs, 13.43% is for Contracted services, 9.93% is for general expenses, the remaining is for depreciation, repair and maintenance.

We have a total estimated capital budget of

\* one million seven hundred fifty thousand rands (R1,750,000) and;

2019/20 IDP/Budget presents us with a total operational deficit amounting to

\* twenty-five million one thousand and one hundred sixty (R25, 001,160).

Ladies and gentlemen, business owners and entrepreneurs

In 2018/19, our district municipality have spent R27 million on local procurement.

We have spent 29.4 % on township economic revitalisation; and our designated groups benefitted as follows from the R27 million rand -:

\* Women - 17.75%, Youth - 24.02 %, People with disability - 0.44%.

We are looking forward to the next financial year to work with the People living with Disabilities Forum in order to open more opportunities for them in our local procurement.

The next financial year, we will have procurement linked to the general expenses and contracted services with possible opportunities amounting to R96, 7 million.

Honourable Chair,

Since the 1913 Act and other related Act of forced removals and land dispossession – our people are still far from their place of work and where they live.

This continues to cause untold costs to travel to and from work.

More so, it diminishes the ability of our poor black youth to go and take advantage of economic opportunities.

Sedibeng District Municipality as part of Gauteng City Region we are working with the provincial government in transforming and reshaping our spatial landscape to be socially and economically inclusive.

Distinguished guests,

On the eve of the 59th Anniversary of Sharpeville Massacre, during the Human Rights Month, we had experienced a “total shut down” in our towns and township.

Truth be told, indeed – we have experienced a very slow progress completion of our taxi rank, in particular Vereeniging Taxido Rank and the yet to be used Bophelong Taxi Rank and our roads were filled with potholes.

Other ranks such as Vanderbijlpark are in continuous decline of disrepair.

We are solidly engaging all stakeholders – the Taxi Associations, National and Provincial department on these challenges.

People of Sedibeng

Let me take this opportunity to congratulate the unity and sense of patriotism which was displayed by the taxi associations, non-profit organisations, civil society and the community members in patching up many potholes in our roads. It truly shows that – development is in our hands and together we can make progress #it’s in your hands

Ladies and gentlemen,

Since the arrival of the Dutch in 1652, the two successive British nationalism and Afrikaner nationalism until 1910 we have witnessed a mineral-energy complex driven economy.

This economy still caters for across racial lines closing out the black and poor African child.

The next 25th years of democracy, we should be in a position to have created enough jobs, build skills and capture talents and honoured our cultural and political heritage in Sedibeng region.

The game changer and job creator for our region rest upon the creative and arts sector.

Honourable Speaker, last year, President Ramaphosa made two points – agriculture and tourism and on another occasion – he emphasized the development of skills not only on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects.

The new addition is the ARTS – this hold a huge potential to our region - It's in our hands.

It is our New Dawn.

STEM have graduated to STEAM – science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM).

People of Sedibeng,

For the next 25 years, we should be talking about our liberation and cultural heritage sites and be exemplary with functional and pioneering heritage sites.

We call on all historians, academia, civil society and business to develop and finalise our Heritage Master Plan of:

\* Sharpeville declaration candidacy for the World Heritage Site;

\* Witkop Blockhouse development

\* Heritage Liberation Routes

\* Mphatlalatsane Theatre

\* Heritage Peace Garden Memorials and new declaration applications

\* Boipatong Museum programmes

In the next financial year (2019/20) – Boipatong Memorial and Youth Centre have been allocated two million five hundred and fifteen thousand (R2, 515, 000) and with 20 job opportunities for the community to ensure that the Monument plays its heritage and developmental role in Boipatong.

We are focused on developing our Mzansi Golden Economy for our communities and people – both nationally and globally by reinforcing the Arts, Culture and Heritage (ACH) Sector as an economic growth sector, and introduce programmes that contribute to large-scale employment. We acknowledge the established forum for the region creatives and arts sector.

We are lobbying the national and provincial to identify – Evaton, the oldest freehold township in South Africa as the home of the new national museum as tabled during the Budget Speech.

Vaal is not only the home of basic human rights; it is also the mecca of African Christianity.

Surely, every one of us remembers and knows Mme Christinah Mokotuli Nku and the St John's Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa founded in 1930.

Honourable members

As we all know “a reading community is a leading community”.

The provincial department have set aside library transfers as follows:

\* Emfuleni Local Municipality will receive R 7 million rand

\* Lesedi Local Municipality is allocated R7 million and lastly Midvaal Local Municipality will receive R 5 million

These transfers are to support the municipalities with the administration and operation of libraries. Furthermore, Emfuleni Local Municipality is allocated more than a hundred million rand

(R100 million rand) in order to transform the urban and rural community libraries infrastructure, facilities and services.

 Chair, Community leaders and developers

Our region have been hamstrung by the long overdue Sedibeng Regional Sewer Scheme, it is one such initiative that will facilitate growth in the area. In Emfuleni only 6 pump stations are functional out of a total of 46 due to lack of maintenance,

\* The Rothdene pump station have been completed, Meyerton Waste Water Treatment Works is a project which will increase the capacity of the plant from 10 Megalitres per Day to 25 Megalitres per Day.

\* Module 6 at Sebokeng Works is at its completion stage, Modules 2 – 5 are also to be brought back to full capacity.

We appeal to the community to be the protectors of our infrastructure maintenance and development, progress have been stalled many a times due to vandalism and theft.

Let me take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to the national and provincial government, Rand Water, the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), business sector and Human Right Commission in working together to ensure that the livelihood of our people are not adversely impacted without proper and coordinated intervention for the entire Vaal River System.

People of Sedibeng,

We have to realise that a community without a vibrant economy is a community in trouble, poverty, disease and low quality of life.

We are to continuously assess and structure our economy to serve its own people and bring hope to the young and emerging business men and women.

Local Economic Development

Sedibeng Brewery was a R3.5 billion investment, creating 3500 construction jobs, and currently looking to expand its supply chain locally, through purchasing barley from 32 local farmers.

Heineken has decided to face market demand to invest in the forthcoming 3 years in Sedibeng by purchasing 30 hectares of land to farm barley; a 100 million euros will be allocated creating 1200 new jobs based on experience.

The Ferrero Rocher Factory in Walkerville employs over 200 people, and Paramount Trailers has expanded their operations massively in the past five years, employing around 300 people currently.

Vopak/Reatile Bulk Liquid Terminal project is currently under construction at Lesedi, Jameson Park.

The company is constructing 48 tanks which will carry petrol, diesel, brand crude oil and aviation fuel from Durban to Jameson Park.

The EPWP has been implemented in various wards of the three local municipalities of Sedibeng District namely Emfuleni, Midvaal and Lesedi.

For the 2018/2019 financial year the cleaning and beautification of Vereeniging CBD has been prioritised while continuing with the programme in Ratanda and the programme has assisted in keeping certain areas of Vereeniging such as taxi ranks clean which were very problematic to people doing business and residents included with the intension of doing more.

The total number of beneficiaries employed in 2018/2019 was 89 from the beginning of the financial year. Sedibeng District Municipality even though under budget constraints has further included the area of Mamello/Vaal Marina as part of rural development support programme.

Agritropolis

Sedibeng MEGA Agri-Park project in Rietkuil Farm has started with the 900-meter fence and construction of boreholes.

Drilling of the foundation for the bridge that will provide access to the farm has also been completed.

Machines and automatic devices have been bought for farmers at a value of

R 16 Million:

Added to that, 48 tractors and implements were recently distributed to individuals for production purposes (commercialization programme).

For the upgrading of Vereeniging Fresh Produce Market, we have conducted and completed the feasibility study.

The project has been registered as Public Private Partnership (PPP) at National Treasury and the municipality is waiting for the departmental Views and Recommendations before the Request for Proposal (RFP) is issued to test the market.

The existing market is in a state of poor condition and has a limited impact on the economy of the area, however plans are in place to implement a mitigation strategy.

Sedibeng view the establishment of key marketing infrastructure as being imperative in giving emerging vegetable and fruit producers a competitive edge.

In instances where emerging producers are well-organised, sharing of market infrastructure and transport could significantly reduce their expenditure and improve gross farm income.

Southern Corridor Regional Implementation Plan

The municipality is also pursuing the construction of the Government Precinct. For this project Sedibeng has been allocated R6.5million by Gauteng Infrastructure Funding Agency (GIFA) for feasibility study.

This project seeks to agglomerate all government services in one place.

This will promote accessibility to government services and improve on efficiency when it comes to service delivery and management of public funds.

Furthermore, the municipality is engaging with developers for the development of a Regional Airport known as the Vaal Aerotropolis along the N1. The Aerotropolis will be situated adjacent to the Vaal Logistics Hub and since the projects complement each other, this will ignite a conglomeration of supporting land uses in the area.

The Vaal River City project is finally germinating and soon we will be breaking ground.

There were challenges with the approved layout plan due to disagreement between the developers and Sasol, however the conditions of establishment have been redrafted and the new layout plan with amended conditions have been resubmitted to Emfuleni Local Municipality.

All engineering related plans have been approved by the local municipality. The tender for the construction of the road interchange between Sharpeville and Bedworthpark is in the early stages and we hope it will be advertised before the year ends.

All relevant stakeholders are working hard to access funds from the department of Human Settlements to start phase 1 of the project which is social housing.

HUMAN SETTLEMENT

There are several title deeds issued per local municipality in 2018/2019,

\* Lesedi 769,

\* Midvaal 1117,

\* Emfuleni 1711.

Tourism Training and Skills Development

• 76 Learners have been recruited from in and around the Emfuleni region and are being trained in Food and Beverage Services, and 39 learners have been recruited in the Lesedi region and are being trained in Fast Food Services, as part of National Department of Tourism's Hospitality Learnership programme.

• 35 Sedibeng Youth have entered a 3-year employment contract with the Gauteng Tourism Authority and are working as Tourism Safety and Information Officers at various tourism attractions in Sedibeng.

SMME Development

The Department of Economic Development in partnership with South African Tourism has sponsored 2 Tourism SMME's from Sedibeng to attend the Africa's Travel Indaba 2019 in Durban.

The two names of the companies are as follows:

\* Thabo Lietsiso Tours & Projects based in Sebokeng

\* Lekoa Guest House based in Bonane

Tourism Marketing

The Sedibeng District Municipality has facilitated a number of marketing initiatives in the second and third quarter of 2018/2019, which include:

\* Facilitating the participation of regional tourism products and services at the South African Tourism Speed Marketing Sessions;

\* Updating and sharing regional product listings for the Sedibeng website;

\* The development of an updated Sedibeng Tourism Map; and

Facilitated and share marketing related information, such as leisure events, to Gauteng Tourism Authority and local publication.

People of Sedibeng,

Ladies and gentlemen; distinguished guests

Our investment in agriculture infrastructure projects will see in excess of three million rand

(R3 million) for the development of Emfuleni Milling Plant.

Vereeniging Fresh Produce Market will receive more attention in order to strengthen linkages of small-scale farmers.

We are working together with our national and provincial department to unlock production capacity of agro-processing and agriculture as well as support programme for the emerging farmers and the agri-park development on Western Part of the District in Vanderbijlpark is one of our flagship projects.

Secondly, tourism has a powerful potential for our region.

Sedibeng, the Vaal is the home of the founding of South Africa's constitution and human rights.

In closing, I quote words of wisdom from Dorothy Height

“Without service, we would not have strong quality of life. It's important to the person who serves as well as the recipient.

It's the way in which we ourselves grow and develop.

You have two hands, one to help yourself, the second to help others.”

Close quote.

I would like to thank my husband Senki, my entire family for their patience for long hours of absence in landing my hand to make Sedibeng region – the powerhouse of heritage and cultural experience.

To my MMCs, Local Mayors, MMs and their EDs, more importantly the immediate staff in my office and the planning team for this event under the leadership of the Director in my office

Mr Archie Mokonane. Ngiyabonga.

To my employers – the people of Sedibeng, I am at your service, we are at your service and ready to listen.

Honorable chair distinguish guests, we all have to be there.

Thuma Mina - Aluta Continua ….