

SPEECH BY CLLR Z.I DUMZELA

EXECUTIVE MAYOR: JOE GQABI DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

**DELIVERED DURING THE COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON 17/09/2015**

Honourable Speaker
Honourable Mayors and Speakers from local municipalities
Chief Whips from the district and local municipalities
Members of the Mayoral Committee
Traditional Leaders
Councillors
Municipal Manager, Directors and officials
Leaders and Members of Civil Society,
Distinguished Guests, Comrades and Friends,
Esteemed members of the Community present here today,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

Honourable Speaker, we are gathered here, shortly after the Eastern Cape has lost 46 people in separate road accidents in Amathole District Municipality and Chris Hani District Municipality. May their souls rest in peace.

It has been a disaster to families and the country. Some of the victims were bread winners. These family members are now in need of someone to provide food, housing and education to mention but a few.

Government is doing everything to improve the condition of our roads. However, it is the responsibility of all motorists to make sure that they drive with caution, their vehicles are road worthy, and they respect other road users.

Madam, Speaker two months ago the province was in the headlines about the high numbers of death initiates.

29 Initiates were reported to have died and there was a number of casualties resulting from circumcisions. Our District have not experienced that catastrophe. A workshop will be held by the House of Traditional Leaders later this month as part of Heritage Month Celebrations and Awareness campaign on circumcision.

Madam Speaker, in July this year, MEC for CoGTA in the Eastern Cape, Mr. Xasa visited us in a campaign to ensure that the BACK TO BASICS programme is implemented. He was comfortable with the handling of the programme within the district and local municipalities. He stressed that the fight against vandalizing, damage to properties and services is everybody's business.

Madam Speaker, the community unrest at the P.G. Bison plant in Elundini Municipality is threatening our political stability. The District has noted the memorandum that was submitted by community members to P.G. Bison. The situation is receiving Political and Administrative attention.

Madam Speaker, seven years ago Joe Gqabi District Municipality was accused of baby deaths through poor service delivery on water. However, scientists investigated the allegation and proved them wrong. Last month the District image was nearly tarnished by contaminated water due to leaking diesel into the Ugie water treatment works. I must applaud the rapid response of our water technicians to identify the source of the problem. I must also appreciate the inter-governmental working relations between the District and Departments of Energy, Economic Development and

Environmental Affairs, Water and Sanitation as well as P.G. Bison to try and resolve the problem without any health related incidents.

The District has discharged safe drinking water to the community of Ugie after receiving positive quality water test reports a week ago.

Madam Speaker, farming communities have indicated a need for electrification of their farms, particularly at Elundini. The matter has been receiving attention from the Department of Minerals and Energy. A team of officials has been sent to these farms for fact finding on infrastructure and to determine cost implications. The District has visited the sites and submitted a request on non-grid electricity to the Department of Minerals and Energy as a temporary measure.

Madam Speaker, the progress on the establishment of the District Agri-Park is well underway. The District together with the Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform recruited 25 young people to be trained on Narysec programme to make sure that human capital is available as and when is needed.

The focus of the Agri-Park will be on primary production in preparation for secondary production (value addition).

The department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform has developed a production plan reflecting the produce expected from the farmers.

Madam Speaker, the Anti-poverty sites programme is implemented in Upper Sinxako and Siqhungqwini villages in Maclear. Great improvements have been achieved in the areas of food security, roads, water provision and education since this programme started in our district. The department of Social Department has handed over two pre-school classrooms equipped with educational material and three ablution facilities in August this month. It is heart-warming to see the impact on the lives of these communities. I also appreciate the inter-governmental relations between the District and the associated Departments in making this programme a huge success.

The District is regarded as best practice in the province in the implementation of the integrated anti-poverty strategy.

Madam Speaker, the annual performance assessment from the Auditor General's office has commenced. The auditors will focus on Irregular Expenditure, Revenue and Debtors as risk areas. It is my wish that we work together towards a clean audit to attract investors into our region.

September is heritage month where we celebrate our traditions, customs and culture . This year's celebrations are focusing on nation building. However, we still see this diverse society as not united in terms of celebrating the provincial and national celebrations of this nature.

It is our history that has brought us together as a nation. It is my concern that today we are as a nation destroying our

history through vandalizing our statues and monuments.

Madam Speaker, I was pleased to see people from all walks of life celebrating the Bisho massacre in memory of those who sacrificed their lives for the betterment of a democratic society.

In closing, I know when we are heading for the local elections we will experience protests. That is acceptable – but, destroying properties is not. Such kind of behavior has not yet surfaced in Joe Gqabi District Municipality. Communities should be encouraged not to engage in such activities. We must work together as councilors, traditional leaders and all other stakeholders in preventing and condemning such irresponsible activities.

I thank you