

SPEECH BY CLLR Z.I DUMZELA

EXECUTIVE MAYOR: JOE GQABI DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

**DELIVERED DURING THE ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON 26 JUNE 2015**

Madam Speaker

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:

Madam Speaker, today's council meeting marks the end of our financial year. It also reminds me that within a period of five months we will be going to the 2016 Local Government Elections. The question remains : "Have we performed as expected by our voters?"

Madam Speaker, the District has made a significant impact since the current council assumed the office on the 6th of June 2011. Let me take you through some of the highlights since then :

The District achieved blue drop status for Ugie and Sterkspruit plants.

The District has implemented spring water protection programmes in Elundini and Senqu.

The District is now also the water service provider in two local

municipalities, and come 1 July 2015, we will also be the provider of water in Gariep and Elundini municipalities.

We are beginning to manage water as a business! Effectively and efficiently.

We, as a District, are busy with the installation of water meters to ensure that all households and businesses will pay for the potable water they use.

Madam Speaker, this executive has improved the dignity of people through rural household sanitation programmes. Over 30 000 units have been built and installed for both Elundini and Senqu local municipalities and over six thousand units are planned for the 2015/16 financial year .

I am pleased to say today that the bucket eradication programme has succeeded and that no household in the formal settlements make use of the bucket system today.

Madam Speaker, providing electricity is not our function, but the District established the Joe Gqabi District Electricity Forum in liaison with Eskom, in an attempt to work together to drive an electrification programme in the District. The latest report of electricity backlogs in the District for 2014/15 is as follows:

Senqu has a backlog of more than 3000 households whilst Elundini has a backlog of more than 11 thousand households. Eskom made provisions for connections to 2500 households for the Elundini Local municipality and 670 households in Senqu Local municipality in the

2014/15 financial year.

Madam Speaker, housing is the responsibility of the Department of Human Settlements. Our role as a District is limited to influence the availability of land within the municipalities. Since 2011, over 2600 new houses were built in the District with a total cost of R335 m. Averagely, one house cost approximately R135 000. This cuts across the 4 Local Municipalities.

Madam Speaker, Joe Gqabi District is amongst the 27 Districts that has been identified for the implementation of an Agri-Park Programme. A Mega-Park site has been identified in Senqu local Municipality. The Maize Meat Hub will be part of this programme and implementation is expected to occur concurrently. If all goes according to plan, an amount of R45 million will be injected into our District for this purpose. This programme aims to create multi-faceted jobs in the Agricultural sector.

Madam Speaker, speaking about JoGEDA, I am convinced that our development agency is becoming an entity to be reckoned with. Through intervention of JoGEDA the National Department of Tourism has committed R8 million towards Aliwal Spa renovations , basic gym equipment and furniture. The Eastern Cape Development Corporation has committed over half a million rands towards ensuring the commercialisation and operationalisation of the Aliwal Spa. This project will create job opportunities approximately to 56 people.

The German Development Agency (GIZ) has committed R174 000 to finalise the feasibility study to implement a plan for the Gariiep Middle Income Housing Project. The Agency is in discussions with potential investors to implement the project.

JoGEDA has secured the business plan for the Maize-Meat-Hub and the project will be integrated with the `Agri-Parks programme.

DEDEAT has approved an amount of R800 000 for the feasibility study business plan for Senqu Plastic Manufacturing.

Madam Speaker, His Excellency, President Zuma, in his State of the Nation Address in February reminded all of us that : I quote “ *Local Government is everybody’s business. We have make it work.*”

He said the launch of the Back to Basics programme is initiated to promote good governance, effective administration, proper public fund management, and the appointment of competent staff to ensure transparency and accountability in the municipalities.

Madam Speaker, being left with only a few months to the 2016 Local Government Elections, I urge all councilors to ensure that they are accountable to the community, to identify hot spots, to respond to petitions, to involve communities in planning and to give proper feedback.

Madam Speaker, I applaud this council and its administration for the achievements and successes over the past few years. They have made a huge difference and impact in the District.

I thank you