

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY EXECUTIVE MAYOR: CLLR Z.I
DUMZELA DURING THE ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON 27 FEBRUARY 2020**

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:

Mr. Speaker, I greet all present here today at the Ordinary Council meeting of Joe Gqabi District Municipality.

Our gathering takes place after we had a short festive period to relax and refresh ourselves to be ready for the work ahead of us.

It was in the month of February, thirty years ago , that former President Rolihlahla Nelson Mandela was released from prison after serving 27 years for fighting for freedom of his people.

Mr Speaker we also celebrate the contribution of our First Premier , Mr, Raymond Mhlaba who would have been 100 years old if he were still alive. A man who stood the test of time as trade union leader and political activist - to mention

but a few. The Province celebrated his birthday at Ndyola village in his hometown, Fort Beaufort.

Mr Speaker, South Africa mourns the passing of Joseph Tshabalala last Tuesday. A man who emerged and showed the world that to be an African and being black is not a shame. The 6 times grammy award winner took African music to the global world and he became a professor in teaching indigenous music in America. A former mine worker, he rose to stardom through musical genre which started as means of entertainment in the mines . His music has drawn the attention of Paul Simon and Dolly Parton to break the barriers during apartheid era. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

Mr Speaker, with these introductory comments I am welcoming all present here today.

At the end of 2019, the District being the water service provider, was faced with huge responsibilities to provide water to all our towns when almost all the dams had dried up. I must appreciate the work done by all of us and the workforce to make sure that water is available against all odds to the community.

Although there were micro biological and ecoli failures in some water treatment plants, the quality of water was never significantly compromised and remained fit for human consumption. The fact that there was no outbreak of water borne disease across the district is testimony to the fact that the potable water we provided passed the test of scientific scrutiny in terms of quality.

Mr Speaker I am concerned about the ongoing vandalism and theft of municipal service delivery infrastructure particularly in Burgersdorp. These irresponsible actions by some few criminal elements have a huge impact on the ability of the District municipality to provide its services on a sustainable basis. However I am pleased that an arrest has been made to that effect.

The ongoing gender based violence is a worrying social phenomenon and is not only restricted to women as was the case in Port Alfred where a woman set fire on her husband and died later on at the hospital.

Mr Speaker, it is the responsibility of all citizens of our country to find a solution to these criminal actions by some members of the communities.

Mr Speaker, the ongoing disruption and political wrangling in our House of Assembly is an embarrassment to the nation and the world and pose a threat to a hard earned democracy.

It has a potential to repel foreign direct investment to South Africa. The level of debates and political intolerance seem to be at their lowest point and does not inspire confidence and hope that some legislators hold the interests of the country at heart.

Decisive steps and actions are required to stem the tide of chaos that is raging in the National Assembly lest the behavior is emulated at all levels of government across the country.

Mr Speaker, The matric class of 2019 has shown some improvement in terms of our results.

The schools in rural areas have emerged with a high pass rate and quality results of University acceptance.

However, we should encourage our children to close the gap in the engineering, artisans, agriculture and technologically oriented fields of study.

I was so delighted about the announcement by President Ramaphosa that new campuses of TVET college are being built in Sterkspruit and Aliwal North to bring post matric learning closer to the rural communities of Joe Gqabi.

Mr Speaker, President Cyril Ramaphosa also emphasized that government is ready to amend Section 25 of the Constitution to table an Expropriation Bill to outline expropriation of land without compensation. If properly implemented, it will go a long way in contributing to the radical economic transformation of our country.

This will help our communal farmers to access land which is lying fallow to practice farming to become employers and also fight shortage of food security. This country is facing food shortage which will force us to import products which would have been produced local. President Ramaphosa is current AU chairperson and he said he will make sure that Africa trade a Africa Made Product.

Mr Speaker, it is pleasing that the provincial government has injected 5,4 billion towards road infrastructure as our roads

need a facelift to reduce fatalities and an improve communication network. Provincial Premier Oscar Mabuyane has committed during his State of the Province Address that the communication network from Aliwal North, Lady Grey and Barkly East will upgraded.

Mr Speaker, Joe Gqabi District Municipality has a mandate serve and deliver service to its community. However the issue of land at times hampers this purpose. The District has a responsibility to drive and co-ordinate regulation policy and development. One of the mechanisms of undertaking this function is through the establishment of Municipal Planning Tribunal.

Following a council decision our District established a District Planning Tribunal. It has initiated the process to ensure functionality of the Tribunal.

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to inform you that JGDM Planning Tribunal is functional. The first meeting was held at Mount Fletcher this month to consider the Ethembeni Housing Project Development. We are to get the confidence of the investor that JGDM is to process all the developmental applications. This will ensure economic development, growth and improve the quality of life of all the residence.

WATER AND SANITATION

The District is doing well in terms of water service delivery despite the infrastructure challenges.

The budget allocation for MIG projects was over R114 million for rural water and sanitation. The Water Services Infrastructure Grant was over R62 million. The MIG expenditure was at 55,5 percent whilst Water Services Infrastructure Grant spending was at 30,67 percent at the end of December 2019. The total expenditure on water and sanitation programmes is 46 .87 percent.

JoGEDA has appointed 174 contractors for Rural Household Sanitation and 156 for Rural Water Supply.

These contractors and suppliers range from CIDB grade 1 to grade 7.

The District has completed rural water supply at Mpoki, Ekra and Musong villages and 44 households have benefited whilst at Macacuma and Mkahteng 390 households have access to sustainable water supply.

The Mkheteng reservoir is not constructed yet. The Lady Grey water storage has increased and 456 households will benefit. The rural sanitation for both Senqu and Elundini is progressing well. Currently 38 586 vip toilets are completed. Our development agency is expected to complete 3619 and 3768 units for Elundini and Senqu local municipalities respectively. The projects are expected to be completed by 30 June 2020.

Mr Speaker, Joe Gqabi Development Agency has been tasked to work with potential investors on catalytic projects with high impact to create jobs and improve economic growth.

One of the projects is the Aliwal Spa Resort and I am pleased to inform this council that the Collosseum Hotel Group has signed a service level agreement for a 29 year lease agreement. A process to facilitate the application to obtain a casino license has started.

Middle income housing is one of the challenges and JGDM and local municipalities have an obligation to provide housing for citizens.

To date the procurement to bid for the interested parties for the development has started and the first showroom house is expected to be completed before end of June 2020.

It is important to have commercial properties to drive economic improvement.

The Senqu Commercial Property was identified as one of the drivers for this purpose. A successful bidder was appointed, with proposed development of mixed commercial properties estimated at R48 million rands.

JoGEDA partnered with Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform to develop a business plan for Elundini Maize Meat Hub. Feedlot Primary Co-operative Limited was registered in February 2019. Funds are being sourced to operationalise the feedlot.

The Rural Agricultural Finance Initiative project was allocated R4.2 million and the project kicked in at Elundini where 92.2

tons of soya beans and maize were harvested . The agency is sourcing markets for the products.

Mr Speaker , JoGEDA is in discussions with TEC plastics from Durban to replicate their factory model at Lady Grey . A new package for a new application is to be submitted to IDC.

Aliwal North Hospital 50 to 100 beds private hospital where Congregation of Sisters of Holy Cross Hospital was identified as a potential site. Lenmed one of four medical groups has shown an interest. The company requested 3 months to enable to perform a due diligence.

The hospital has renewed its license which expires in September 2020. The owner is selling the building for R9 million. The agency will assist the potential investor to facilitate funding for the project to commence.

The success of the economy depends on SMME's. The Agency has partnered with University of Stellenbosch Business Unit to train and develop local SMME's over the past two years of existence. Another group of 22 has registered but fell short of its target of 30.

The EPWP programme has commenced at Mooi River wetlands in Ugie. The budget allocation for the drought relief fund was R5 million. Currently deliverance is at 29 percent and expenditure is also at 29 percent. Meanwhile the EPWP per person days is at 31 percent.

Mr Speaker the institution has suffered financial challenges

through water carting to the communities during the drought, especially at Walter Sisulu Local Municipality.

The installation of pre-paid water meters to mitigate and manage water scarcity is an ongoing process. I am pleased that members of the community have realized the importance of the programme and the demand for the installations is increasing.

The Municipal Health Services By-laws have shown positive impact as a number of businesses which were closed are now complying to the regulations.

Mr Speaker, Minister of Finance Tito Mboweni has increased National Budget by 1.8% compared to previous year for Local Government. The National Budget is allocated 48%, Provincial Government 43% and Local Government 8.8%. The R426 billion is not enough considering the challenges and service delivery needs. The aging infrastructure will continue demanding millions of rands for both replacement and maintenance.

It is imperative to engage National Government to refrain from budget allocation based on population that addressing the backlog of the infrastructure and service delivery to our people.

I thank you