

Maaparankwe goba le baemedi ba bona

Fellow Councillors

Council officials and officials from other municipalities and sector departments

IEC Officials

Dignitaries

Members of the community

And all protocol observed

Honourable Speaker, I stand here before you at the height of arguably the most important month in the history of our liberation struggle, one that marks the recognition of women's immense efforts and contribution towards total emancipation and establishment of the new order as we see it today. The continued role of women can never be overstated as the Sepedi adage, "Mmago ngwana o swara thipa ka bogaleng" resonates well with the heroic feats of women who marched to the Union Buildings in Pretoria on that that momentous day, the 9th of August 1956 led by the only prominent surviving leader, the legendary Sophia Williams de Bruyn as well as late icons; Albertina Sisulu, Hellen Josephs, Raheeda Moosa and Lillian Ngoyi to mention but a few. Re sa buša re lebogiša le go duduetša seabe seo ka go re halala basadi halalaaa!!!

By the same token, we'd also like to extend our sincere gratitude to the multitudes of South Africans in general and Bloubergers in particular, who in their quest to exercise their rights of universal suffrage, travelled long distances and braving calamitous weather conditions in the process. The recently held elections are a shot in the arm for our fledgling democracy and image. That the elections were ultimately declared free and fair is the cherry on top and is appreciated regardless of the apparent power shift in councils throughout the country and with our municipality no exception as for the first time since inception we get content with some eleven members of the opposition parties overall. We heartily welcome all the parties namely; the EFF that managed to gain 8 seats, the DA with their 2 seats as well as the COPE with a single one. We, as the majority and ruling ANC party make a humble appeal to all parties to prioritise, respect and represent the electorate. I also want to make a clarion call to all of us as councillors to uphold the values and our standing as public representatives notwithstanding conducting ourselves with the integrity and highest moral standards that befit the offices we occupy. Acting Municipal Manager, you have already made me aware that rigorous internal and SALGA sanctioned induction programmes await us as councillors and it is my humble appeal to all of us as councillors to dedicate our time and attend the workshops which will eventually come in very handy in our endeavour to diligently carry out our duty of fulfilling the overriding mandate of provision of basic services to our communities.

Honourable Speaker, I'd also like to acknowledge and appreciate the role played by my predecessors in the persons of Comrades Refiloe Kubyana, Serite Segoloane and Sammy Selamolela. Though no two people are the same, the one common denominator in respect of the alluded to daughter and sons of the soils and putting myself in the mix is that we are cut from the same cloth and that the African National Congress is our home. I am on the verge of succeeding esteemed leaders who all came with different attributes and each time raised the bar, pioneering and ensuring a sustainable municipality. Among their notable achievements is the development of a functional public participation model which is revered countrywide. It has also emerged in recent times that our Community Safety Strategy is also making serious strides in the provincial stakes and is fast becoming a force to be reckoned with. Treasury Department's additional R24 million windfalls stemming from judicious spending on the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) projects did not go unnoticed and serve as a tonic for better things to come. It is our intention to consolidate on the gains made as we, being the tradition steeped and rural municipality that we are, also commit to work closely with our traditional authorities with emphasis on resuscitating the Councillors-Mantona Fora

and having regular checks with dikgoro on their rapport with ward committees in order to proactively attend to any imminent disjuncture stemming from the respective relationships. Same mutually beneficial relationships with sector departments need to be harnessed at all costs as they are significant budget holders in the various aspects notably Agriculture, Labour, Roads and Transport as well as Social Development to mention but a few. These have over the years proved to be the Achilles Heels in the service delivery mandate. We reiterate that from the political front, we pledge our support to all programmes that are geared towards making our municipality a vital cog of hope with regards to the overriding deliverables in the basic services provision stakes.

Honourable Speaker, we also wish to extend an olive branch to our beloved municipal workforce as a critical stakeholder in the service delivery trajectory. We appeal to all of you to roll up your sleeves and remind yourselves of the reason you are in the municipal employ in the first place. We are aware of the general perception and belief that new orders come with sweeping changes that tantamount to purging but be rest assured, there is no intention to that effect whatsoever and Acting Municipal Manager, we appeal to you to ascertain that all involved in administration pull their weight in the same direction. We are also not oblivious of the fact that audit time is upon us and be rest assured that we are hell bent on accepting collective responsibility, whichever opinion as we adhere to the collective leadership and responsibility doctrine.

Honourable Speaker, we are fully aware that the development of infrastructure is the cornerstone in so far as attraction of potential investors and economic development are concerned. We also ensure support and ultimate sustainability of SMMEs as another means of contributing to job creation. Our assumption of responsibility will also serve to galvanise our effort of preparing our young people academically for them to be marketable, take advantage of economic opportunities especially in the tourism, agriculture and mining industries and activities within our radar as well as establishing viable businesses. We understand the socio-economic and service delivery backlogs that engulf our municipality coupled with all related frustrations but we reiterate that working together, we can do more. In conclusion, I wish to draw from our esteemed and erstwhile President Utata Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela who stated, "What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead". Seo sa ra gore, a re kodumeleng go dira phapano mo maphelong a batho ba ga bo rena. Together as a team of men and women, we can ensure that we keep the Blouberg Local Municipality boat afloat.

We can only thrive and achieve the rest together.

Amandla!!!