

**STATE OF THE DISTRICT ADDRESS BY THE EXECUTIVE  
MAYOR OF THE SEDIBENG DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY  
CLLR. MAHOLE SIMON MOFOKENG, CIVIC THEATRE,  
VEREENIGING -28 MAY 2014**

**PART ONE – GREETINGS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Thank you Madam Speaker

Before I do my greetings, salutations and acknowledgments, let me preface my address with this inspirational message of eagerness from an unknown author:

***“Dear Past, thank you for the lessons. Dear Future ... I am Ready.”***

- Honoured Guests with us here today at the Vereeniging Civic Theatre,
- Executive Mayors of our Local Municipalities,
- Our Guests from our Neighboring Municipalities;
- Executive Mayor of Tshwane Metro Cllr. Kgotientsho Ramogopa,
- Executive Mayor of West Rand District Municipality, Cllr. MphoNawa,

- Fellow Councilors,
- Ladies and gentlemen.

It seems just like yesterday when we hosted the FIFA World Cup here in South Africa.

Yet we meet this afternoon in great anticipation of the 20th FIFA World Cup which is to start in 15 days from now.

This tournament will take place in Brazil from the 12<sup>th</sup> June to 13<sup>th</sup> July this year.

Time moves fast as we age.

I am still pondering if the win of the South African Premier Soccer League by the MamelodiSundowns has any link with the FIFA World Cup taking place in Brazil.

This State of the District Address for 2014 takes place 3 days after the continent celebrated the Africa Day.

Africa Day is the annual commemoration, on May 25<sup>th</sup> each year to mark the founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963.

On this day, leaders of 30 of the 32 independent African States signed a founding charter in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The OAU was renamed African Union on the 26<sup>th</sup> May 2001 in Addis Ababa, and re-launched on the 9<sup>th</sup> July 2002 in South Africa and it now consists of 54 independent States.

Africa Day marks the onward progress of the African liberation movements, and it also symbolizes the determination of the people of Africa to free themselves from foreign domination and exploitation.

The people of Sedibeng join the world in praying for more than 200 girls who were kidnapped by the *Boko Haram* rebels in Nigeria.

We commit our support to the 'Bring-Back-Our-Girls' campaign.

We wish that the African Union comes up with an amicable solution to this mischievous act.

Lest forget, that it was on the 31<sup>st</sup> May 1961, when a new Constitution was born in our country.

Under the terms of that Constitution, South Africa left the commonwealth and became the Republic of South Africa.

Also on the very same date, 31<sup>st</sup> May in 1902, just a little before midnight, two parties signed the Peace treaty of Vereeniging at the Melrose House in Pretoria.

By 54 votes to 6, the representatives agreed to surrender their independence and to recognize the authority of Edward the 4<sup>th</sup> in return for, amongst others, the promise of eventual self-government.

Significant amongst the terms of that treaty, was to defer a decision on the franchise for the black majority.

That decision was an injustice that lasted for 92 years until it was corrected in 1994 when all South Africans voted in a new democracy.

That period of injustice was to bring about the birth of the oldest liberation movement in Africa - the African National Congress.

We note that the month of May has great significance for the history of the Vaal Region.

Also on the 31 May in 1979, the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) was established. It was formed as a national organization to represent the interests of Black school students in the wake of the Soweto uprisings.

COSAS organized students at secondary and night schools, as well as technical, teacher training and correspondence colleges.

We remember the contribution of COSAS as a dynamic force of transformation led mainly by our youth of the day.

## **THE 30<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE VAAL UPRISINGS**

On the subject of historical significance, 2014 is also of significance.

Just as the 21<sup>st</sup> March is remembered and commemorated for the Sharpeville massacre, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2014, South Africa, and the world, will join hands with our people in Sedibeng in remembering and commemorating the Vaal Uprising.

This year, 2014, marks the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Vaal Uprising.

These events have undoubtedly put South Africa in the spot light and also accelerated our liberation struggle.

It is for that reason that we as the people of Sedibeng, can on this day stand-up tall and be counted amongst those who contributed in fighting for democracy and freedom in our land.

We, as the Sedibeng District Municipality, will make all efforts to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> Commemoration of the Vaal Uprisings with a comprehensive programme that will elevate this historical event to its rightful place in our history.

As we celebrate 20 years of freedom, we salute some of our very own who survived that fateful day in Sharpeville on 21 March 1960 as well as the other massacres that befell our people.

We also remember the Sharpeville 6 and former Delmas trialists for their heroic roles in our struggle for liberation.

### **PASSING ON OF TATA MANDELA**

Madam Speaker, when we met this time last year, the founding Father of our democracy, Tata Mandela, was ill but still with us.

As we meet today, he is no longer with us – May His Soul Rest In Peace.

How does one even begin to capture in words the impact of the loss for South Africa and the world with the passing on of this great symbol of peace and humanity.

When the world descended on Qunu on 15 December 2013, it was for what was widely regarded as the funeral of the century.

President Vladimir Putin of Russia said that South Africa's former President Nelson Mandela was a "**great humanist of the 21st century**" and said his policy should become an example to follow.

Invoking Gandhi, Martin Luther King and the American founding fathers, the President Obama spoke of Mandela as “the last great liberator of the 20th century” — a man who, after emerging from prison, held his country whole without taking up arms.

Nelson Mandela’s legacy created the opportunity for South Africa to achieve a common future.

It was through his vision and grace that the world witnessed forgiveness; it was through his example that South Africans were able to follow his path of healing in recognition of the light of humanity that touches all people – irrespective of colour or race.

When this great man had to sign South Africa’s Constitution into law, he chose to do it here in Sharpeville.

How blessed we were as people of the Vaal.

## **SALUTATIONS**

As I deliver this address, I am not only talking to the audience in this Vereeniging Civic Theatre, but also to 5 satellites viewing sites across Sedibeng.

We started this live broadcast concept in 2010, and it has grown since then.

Many other government departments are replicating this concept.

Let me acknowledge the audience and the programme directors from our different viewing sites.

From the Vaal University of Technology, as their motto says '**your world to a better future**', I greet the students there with their Programme Director Thabang Mandoro –: Hellow VUT Hellow

At the North West University, with '**Innovation through diversity**' as their motto, we welcome the students there under the direction of James Ncetani.: Heita North West Heita.

On that note, let me also welcome the community of Ratanda in Heidelberg gathered at the Ratanda Multipurpose Centre and our Programme Director there, Tshepo Moloji.

We also welcome the people of Evaton and Sebokeng assembled at the Mafatsana Community Hall under the Programme Direction of Cllr. Patrick Mokoena.

At the Sicielo Community Hall in Midvaal, we are joined by an audience who are being directed by our Programme Director, Cllr. Praise Boland.

Lastly we have our viewers both in public viewing areas and on DSTV.

Distinguished guest in this august house.

Greetings to you all.

Madam Speaker,

In Sedibeng we are not only just telling our good stories, we are writing them.

Our journey was stamped when the Constitution of South Africa was signed here, in Sedibeng Region on 10<sup>th</sup> December 1996.

Our Constitution is an epitome to the written Constitutions of the world.

To show our appreciation as the people of Sedibeng, we will this evening, bestow an Award to the Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa, the Honourable Cyril Ramaphosa on behalf of the Members of the Constitutional Team under the leadership of none other than *ntate* Mandela for having chosen

Sharpeville as the physical address of our democratic Constitution.

As I mentioned earlier, it is the first time this year that we are broadcasting our State of the District Address to our students and lecturers live at two tertiary institutions; the first of which is the North-West University, and the second is the Vaal University of Technology both in Vanderbijlpark.

We do this to bestow on our young people, an appreciation of where we come from and where we are heading to.

As we report on some of the work we did last year, we also recognise and acknowledge the present, and plot the future.

It is imperative that we share that future vision with the young people who will inherit this future from us.

The theme for this State of the District Address is one that dominates our political, social and economic life in 2014.

It is about celebrating ***'Twenty Years of Democracy'*** and looking ahead to the next Twenty Years and beyond.

We have much to celebrate; we have learnt much from our past twenty years; we are ready for the future.

## **PART TWO – TWENTY YEARS OF DEMOCRACY IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The American entrepreneur, author and the writer Jim Rohn once said; ***“Your Life does NOT get better by Chance, it gets better by Change”***.

In 20 Years of democracy, life in South Africa has indeed changed, not just by chance, but by deliberate change.

Before I get into addressing matters here at home, it would be useful to contextualise our situation into a national and provincial context.

This would allow us to see our place in a South African context as well as in the Province of Gauteng.

Often as politicians we are accused of telling our own good story in ways that shows us in shining terms without any regard for our challenges and weaknesses.

It is for this reason that I will refer to the globally respected independent business analysts, from the Goldman-Sachs Group as I present an overview of our success story as South Africa.

## **GOLDMAN REPORT**

On 4 November, 2013 The Goldman-Sachs Group launched its report “*Two Decades of Freedom: What South Africa is Doing with It, and What Now Needs to be Done.*”

I would encourage all of you to get hold of this report and to study it in detail.

For the purpose of this address, I will share just a few highlights from the report.

The report provides a data-rich, empirical analysis of how South Africa has changed in the past 20 years and its position in the world.

It identifies the 10 areas in which South Africa has made structural advances, the 10 large challenges that remain to be tackled, and the 10 key issues which must now be addressed.

Examples of these advances since 1994 are:

THAT theGDP in South Africa almost tripled from 136bn US Dollars to 385bn US Dollars today. We have enjoyed the similar GDP growth here in Sedibeng.

**That the** Inflation fell from a 1980-1994 average of 14% to an average of 6% from 1994-2012. You can well imagine what our country and our region would have been like if we did not reduce inflation.

**That the** Gross gold and Foreign Exchange reserves rose from 3bn US Dollars to 50bn US Dollars today.

**That the** Tax receipts of R114bn from 1.7m people rose to R814bn from 13.7m people. Most South Africans pay their taxes. Most of us don't like the tax bill, but we make our contribution to the National Fiscus.

**In** the past decade a dramatic rise in the middle class, with 4.5 million consumers graduating upwards from the lower (1-4) Living Standards Measure (LSM), and in total 10 million consumers were added to the (5-10) LSM

**The** Social grant beneficiaries rose from 2.4m to 16.1m people today.

These facts are the realities affecting millions and millions of South Africans. There should be no doubts why even as recently as three weeks ago, the large majority of South Africans continue to express faith in the ruling party, the African National Congress.

The Goldman report also identifies the following significant challenges amongst others:

- The high levels in Unemployment especially amongst young people.
- The high wealth gap based on the racial divide.
- The current account deficit of 6.5% is still high.
- The contribution of mining and manufacturing to GDP has fallen to 23% from 38% in 1986.
- Household debt to disposable income has soared.

It is the conclusion of the Goldman Report that should resonate with us here in Sedibeng as we bring these national perspectives closer to home.

It says that:

Much progress has been recorded in two decades of our democracy, (Just as it is here in Sedibeng)

Significant challenges remain, (just as they do here in our Region.)

We live in a 'good neighborhood' but in a mixed and challenging world.(This is so true for our country and equally true of Sedibeng.)

Leaders across Government, business, labour, academia, institutions and civil society need to take individual and collective decisive actions. (Just as we need to do to improve Sedibeng's competitiveness and overall performance within the context of Gauteng Globally Competitive City Region.)

We know what needs to be done, we need effective 'team work' and 'execution' excellence, therefore lets join hands to move Sedibeng forward in preparations for the Vaal River Metropolitan Municipality come 2016.

The good story that South Africa has to tell, is equally the good story of the improvements in the quality of life in Sedibeng since 1994.

## **ANC MANIFESTOS**

While many citizens view political manifestos as political rhetoric, but looking back over two decades, you will realise that what we have achieved is not as a result of pure chance, but based on what the African National Congress committed to do through its various elections manifestos translated into government programmes. In fact if global conditions were better, we could have even achieved much more.

Since 1994, the African National Congress set out to build a Democratic, Non-Sexist, Non-Racial, United and Prosperous South Africa, which will guarantee a Better Life for All our people by dealing with the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment.

We have just successfully held our fifth free and fair general elections and our democracy thrives. New political parties contest for representation, in all corners of our country and we cast our votes from a common voters roll.

The spirit of the Freedom Charter thrives amidst a globally changing world, and we enjoy freedom irrespective of greed, colour, race, sex or belief. Our broad development principles enshrined in the Freedom Charter were further detailed and translated into implementable programmes in the RDP focusing on linking growth and development, reconstruction and redistribution, reconciliation and unity.

The African National Congress, while contesting for political space, has never ignored the ability of the collective effort of all South Africans to build our future. Our long term development path is now based on the National Development Plan. A vision for our future forged from the best minds in our country, from all race groups and across all professions.

It is not by chance that Sedibeng and South Africa is what it is today.

Even the harshest critics should take a moment to applaud the achievements of the African National Congress.

Let me pause for a moment to congratulate all political parties for their achievements in the recent elections.

Congratulations to the Democratic Alliance on your 22% National support, Congratulations to the EFF for being the new kid on the block with 6% of the national votes, but mostly, congratulations to the African National Congress for your 62% poll. This is outstanding mainly because so many were lamenting before the elections that the people have lost all confidence in the ANC. When images of service delivery protest were flashing on our TV screens and making the front page of our papers, some said it was the end of the ruling party. Some experts predicted that the ANC would gain just under 50% of the votes in this last election.

Having said the above allow me to congratulate President Jacob Zuma and the team for the confidence the people of South Africa has shown on them by returning them back into parliament with the resounding majority.

Equally, allow me to say Farwell to Cllr Mcloughlin of the DA who has left us to join the National Assembly. We trust that he will champion the Sedibeng issues in the National Parliament.

### **PART THREE – LIFE IN GAUTENG SINCE 2014**

Before I talk about the quality of life in the Gauteng Province since 1994, allow me to congratulate the newly elected Premier of Gauteng Cde David Makhura and his team of MEC's on their appointments.

As we celebrate the gains of the last 20 years in this Province which is the economic hub of our country, the future looks even brighter as the best minds of the African National Congress will be driving this Province in the next 5 years.

It has also been the progressive policies of the ANC in Gauteng Province that has given us a Province that is moving to the Global City Region, a Province that has a high speed train to set the best examples of the world quality that our people deserve.

The improvement to the quality of life in our Province through social and economic infrastructure development has been the

result of many bold decisions. We must always muster the courage to take bold decisions to bring about meaningful change.

Some unknown writer once said; ***“It’s better to be a lion for one day, than a sheep all your life.”***

Whilst many households in Gauteng face a high cost of living a 20-year review of the Gauteng Province has demonstrated that democratization and significant transformation has brought about remarkable changes for the majority of people compared to the past.

It is encouraging to note that the Human Development Index in Gauteng has increased steadily, particularly between 2010 and 2012.

## **THE CHANGING FACE OF SEDIBENG**

### **Spatial Development**

Apartheid spatial development placed black communities far away from towns and places of work and as a result towns and townships were not linked to each other.

However that has begun to change since the dawn of democracy as many link roads have been developed connecting towns and townships, and townships to other townships. The K55 route (joining Steelpark via Boipatong and Sharpeville to Vanderbiljpark), and Eastern By-Pass are few examples of completely new routes built since 1994.

Some neighbourhoods, such as Three Rivers, Vanderbiljpark, Sonlanparketc are not exclusively white neighbourhoods anymore.

Racial integration is still dictated by financial means, but at least if a family can afford a house in Three Rivers East, irrespective of race or religion, all they need to do is call the number on the estate agents board outside the house of their choice and do the deal.

## **On Housing**

Since 1994, in Sedibeng as many as 71 244 houses have been built with electricity, running water and sanitation with over 85% connected to basic services.

Accordingly, all old township houses that were without electricity for years, and some of the houses that were without running water and waste collection, now enjoy these services.

The historical backlog was enormous, and subsequently, we still have about 1000 informal settlement households in the region that are without sanitation including privately owned plots, but the progress made has been huge.

On the subject of housing, we are proud to showcase the housing project in Golden Gardens that moves away from the basic 'matchbox' style of RDP house to basic unit that is features with a style that is modern, spacious and well equipped with the back yard rooms.

Later this year the community of Boiketlong will also join other communities when their RDP House, Government Subsidised Bonded Houses and Rental Stock construction gets off the ground transforming their area into a complete human settlement with all economic and social facilities.

## **HEALTH AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

The building of Community Health Centres in Evaton and in Boipatong, as well as introduction of referral system and upgrading of both Levai-Mbatha and Sharpeville clinics to operate 24 hours, has improved peoples access to health care. It has also alleviated influx of people to hospitals on minor health care issues.

Accordingly, clinics are being upgraded and being built at the same time. Others are upgraded to improve provision of primary health care service to communities.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT**

The development of infrastructure was improved tremendously compared to pre 1994. Billions of rands have been spent to upgrade the infrastructure capacity to allow planned developments in the region. Sewer capacity remains the biggest bottleneck.

Is for this reason that the current plan to sustain our development trajectory was initiated with the conception and roll out of the Sedibeng Regional Sewer for increased capacity.

Development in road infrastructure has improved lives of motorists and commuters with the construction of more than 1800 kilometers of roads in the region especially in the townships. All main streets and inter-connecting streets in the former black townships are today tarred by the ANC led government.

This includes extension of Moshoeshoe in Sebokeng and links roads such as LebohangMahata, Eastern Bypass to mention few.

More roads were built and upgraded both in towns and township in and around Sedibeng. New taxi ranks were built in Sebokeng, Sharpeville, Boipatong and the Vereeniging Rank is being constantly upgraded.

During this period sports and recreation facilities were improved with the construction of Saul Tsotetsi Sport facility and development and upgrading of various Community Halls, Stadiums, Sharpeville Cricket Pitch and Netball fields to promote sports and healthy lifestyle among the youth. Improvement in sporting infrastructure saw Sedibeng successfully hosting two National teams to use our local

facilities as training base during 2010 FIFA World Cup Tournament.

### **RENEWING OUR ECONOMY - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The historical towns of Vereeniging, Vanderbiljpark and Meyerton have been the bedrock of an industrial hub to support manufacturing that was established in this region. This development had caused massive job creation and job opportunities in the region with over 21 000 people employed by the then ISCOR (now Arcelor Mittal). This and many other local steel and metal industries attracted migrant labourers from other parts of the country.

The restructuring in the national economy and subsequent partial privatization of ISCOR to establish the present day Arcelor Mittal has come with massive job losses and curtailed economic development and growth in the regional economy.

This resulted in the need to restructure the regional economy away from dependence on steel and metal sector manufacturing. It became important to diversify the local economy, whilst we retain and expand the existing business

and the attraction of the new business thereby create opportunities in other sectors of the economy.

The interventions through our local long term strategies and plans to diversify the economy of the region has improved the stability of the local economy tremendously after the decline caused by the restructuring in the manufacturing sector.

Let us look at some of the hard evidence of the growing economy of Sedibeng:

- **In Midvaal** we have started breaking ground at a development called Savannah City on our northern border with Johannesburg. This new development will eventually bring a staggering 18,000 new houses to our region in a mixed housing development.
- The Kilpriver Business Park along the R59 is underway and will grow in a short space of time as the nucleus of a future Midrand- Style development for the Vaal River Metropolitan Municipality.
- **IN EMFULENI ALONG THE R57 DEVELOPMENT CORRIDOR**, what was once small shopping centres are being expanded into fully fledged Malls. The Evaton Plaza is an example of this expansion.

- **THE DEVELOPMENT ZONE BETWEEN VEREENIGING AND VANDERBIJLPARK** alongside Sharpeville seems to be expanding by the day. Recently we saw the development of a new Makro and several small business units along the barrage road and now we see new Dischem and Baby City development under construction.
- **IN LESEDI THE ZONE OF OPPORTUNITY** is progressing steadily with new additions on a regular basis.

It came to those of us, that having been watching these developments over the years, as no surprise when StatsSA confirmed in its 2011 Census that Unemployment in Sedibeng dropped by a massive 12 percentage points from 43.9% to 31.9% in just ten years. We did not write this good story, it's a story based on the hard facts from Stats SA. It's not from a story book of fiction.

Not a week passes by without some investor or the other, both local and foreign, handing us business cards to encourage contact with a view of doing developments in our area.

## **PART FOUR – SEDIBENG DISTRICT AND ITS LOCALS – 2014/2015 IDP & BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS**

Every year as we present this State of the District Address, we present progress on matters large and small, on matters big and bold and some seemingly of little significance.

Always remember ***“A Little Progress every day, adds up to big results.”***

## **KEY ASPECTS OF THE 2014/15 IDP SECTOR PROGRAMMES FOR SEDIBENG DISCTRICT**

For the coming 2014/15 Financial Year the Sedibeng District Municipality will be focusing on the key programmes and projects related to the Five-R's-Plus-Two, focus areas as contained in the Sedibeng Growth and Development Strategy

**On REINVENTING THE ECONOMY**we have begun to grow sectors other than manufacturing so as to diversify our economy. The Services Sector, The Financial Sector, the Tourism Sector and the Agricultural Sectors are all on the rise.

To further our objectives in the coming financial year we will:

- ***Continue with our Bio digester Projects.*** A Bio Digester is a clean and alternative energy innovation to improve

access to energy by local poor community. The programme converts waste material into methane gas for energy that can be used for normal domestic energy use.

The Bio Digester has been installed in two Primary schools in Sharpeville namely Lebowa Combined and Vuyo Primary School and as a result the local schools and local Community will benefit.

It is a Partnership programme funded, coordinated and implemented between Gauteng Department Of Economic Development, Vaal University Of Technology (VUT) and Sedibeng District Municipality.

***In the quest to support SMME's and drive innovation we will develop our Fabrication Laboratory:***

- ***This*** is a programme to support the local SMMEs operating in the Manufacturing sector for the incubation and promotion of small operators with ICT supported and designed Manufacturing and Research capability for product development.

- The project is located at Vaal University of Technology as part of the few Science Parks currently accredited.

***Our Tourism Sector continues to grow steadily and we will launch an innovative project which we have dubbed the 'Passport Project':***

- This project is a Tourism Awareness initiative to promote domestic tourism and will be rolled out through schools. The schools will be encouraged to visit tourism and heritage sites and for each visit, learners will have their '**passports**' stamped to accumulate number of stamps to win prizes.

***For those individuals and businesses that excel in the Tourism industry, we will continue our prestigious and much applauded Tourism Awards:***

- This is a Sedibeng District Municipality project in partnership with Tourism stakeholders and other spheres of Government to promote excellence and quality assurance in the sector. These awards are also promoting local attractions.

With Job Creation high on our agenda we must do better with the opportunities presented by our Expanded Public Works Programme and Community Works Programme

These programmes are initiatives funded by National and Provincial Government implemented by Local Government to create job opportunities and skills development.

In the Sedibeng District Municipality we have targeted create 3 300 job opportunities and skills development.

**ON RENEWING OUR COMMUNITIES** have been largely driven at the District level through our Precinct Projects. With the Sharpeville Precinct Project well developed by now, we will invite private investment into other Precincts development.

**SEBOKENG CULTURAL PRECINCT PROJECT:** We have begun to develop multi-purpose cultural precinct and associated trading spaces to make the precinct an attractive stop for Tourists along proposed Emfuleni Heritage route.

This project intends to Revitalize the Eldorado Theatre to be used as Arts & Culture Centre; and add retail spaces for SMME's and stalls/canopies for informal trading. It includes the Renovation of the existing plaza behind the then Shoprite site to create a historical monument in the form of Community Park and Building a New Community Clinic.

The cost of this Precinct is around R18 million and is funded by the Neighbourhood Development Programme

**WATERFRONT PRECINCT:** The Sedibeng Waterfront Precinct is an important development area in Emfuleni and Sedibeng as it emanates from the '**Vaal 21**' initiative, which is a cross-border agreement between the southern Gauteng municipalities (Sedibeng) and the northern Free State municipalities (FezileDabi) to work together to develop a regional economy around both banks of the Vaal River.

The Purpose of the Precinct Plan is to consolidate existing planning initiatives into a single document; Identify gaps within the existing documents that will then be addressed by the Precinct Plan in terms of Planning Proposals; and Clearly set

out an action plan for the implementation of existing as well as new development proposals both sides of the Vaal River.

**THE CIVIC/ GOVERNMENT PRECINCT:**The Civic Precinct in the Vereeniging CBD has been identified as a priority development area. The concept of precinct identification involved flagship projects which would need to be taken forward in partnership with other spheres of government and the private sector.

The vision for the government precinct is to create a vibrant one-stop civic service area, where a range of government services and civic facilities are easily accessible to the community of the Sedibeng District, which is to form the core of a rejuvenated, mixed use Central Business District. The Precinct will comprise an 18 storey building which must be completed by local government elections 2016 as it will house the seat for the Vaal River Metropolitan Municipality.

**ON REVIVING A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT**we continue to pursue solar energy for water heating and electricity generation and a wide range of programmes to install energy saving lighting has been undertaken. In the coming year we:

- Will promulgate Air Quality Management (AQM) By-laws for the Sedibeng region.
- Will operate and maintain air quality management stations.
- Will issue Conversion of all Air Pollution Prevention Act (APPA) registration certificates to Atmospheric Emission Licenses.
- Will promulgate the Environmental Municipal Health Services (MHS) By-laws for the Sedibeng region.
- Will implement an Industrial Waste Exchange Program (IWEX).

**ON REINTEGRATING THE REGION**we have seen what road construction does to promote mobility and reduce costs. The development of the R82 is an example of this. In the coming year with regard to Transport, the Districtwill:

- Improve the safety and security within the licensing centres across Sedibeng.
- Upgrade the Vanderbijlpark and Meyerton Vehicle Testing Service (VTS) to undertake Vehicle License Renewal Drive-Thru's.

- Introduce the provision of licensing services on Saturdays in all licensing centres.
- Work with PRASA (Passenger Rail of South Africa) for the development and promotion of rail in the region.
- Facilitate the speedy implementation of the Sedibeng Regional Sewer.
- And in a coordinated multi-disciplinary manner, drive the Vereeniging Intermodal Hub Precinct to connect with our Waterfront Precincts. The current upgrade to the Taxido Taxi rank is well underway, and we expect PRASA to come on board shortly with the Vereeniging Station upgrade. Our long term vision is to connect the city of Vereeniging across the rail line to the Waterfront on the eastern side of the city.

**RELEASING THE HUMAN POTENTIAL** of the people of Sedibeng remains a high priority for us. Since we launched our busary programme, we have supported 218 students. In the past financial year we added 37 students and will continue to do the same in the next financial year.

In the next financial year we will:

Continue with our extensive Heritage Programs that includes

- a comprehensive Human Rights Day Commemoration
- Commemorating the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Vaal Uprising as I mentioned during my opening.
- Building on our recently renewed efforts to commemorate the signing of the Peace Treaty of Vereeniging
- Marking the signing of the South African Constitution in Sharpeville on 10 December 1996.
- Promoting the connection with all the Constitutional Epochs and their connections to the Vaal Region.

The Sedibeng District Municipality always keeps the GEYODI programme uppermost in its mind.

GEYODI derives its mandate from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. It serves to ensure gender equality and condemn all forms of discrimination and Human Rights violations. This is through making laws and implementing programmes to ensure the consistent application of equality measures for Women, the Youth, and People with Disabilities. At Sedibeng we also consider the plight of our Ex-Combatants. In this regard:

For our YOUTH we continue our comprehensive bursary Programme. Our Youth Centres are functional and fully

supported with IT support. Recently we partnered with the Zondo Foundation to provide essential requirements for school learners from the school Districts of Sedibeng East and West as well as across our borders in the Free State. Cooperatives formed trained by DID

For WOMEN we have facilitated several Cooperatives to ensure employment and empowerment . Sedibeng District conducted several workshops on business development training for women. We also had targeted programmes for the women within the Sedibeng Municipality. We will continue these programmes into the next financial year.

For PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY we were recognised by the Gauteng premier for our programmes under the umbrella body called SEDIFO or Sedibeng Disability Forum. Several provincial programmes were supported especially with transport support. We also hosted the Disability games and conducted workshops on Lifeskills and HIV & Aids education for People With Disabilities.

For our EX-COMBATANTS we have facilitated several empowerment agreements that have created jobs for these precious members of our society.

Our internal Ex-Combatants Programme was applauded by the Deputy Minister, Thabang Makwetla, who recognised we were one of the only municipalities who had initiated an Ex-Combatants programmes while others were awaiting a national directive. We are about to conclude SLA with the Ministry to access several of their national programmes. We will continue with these efforts.

We can never forget our ELDERLY. Several Programmes were executed to provide blankets, promote healthy lifestyle programmes, conduct screening for illnesses, assist with registration for grants. We also provided wheelchairs for some who needed them

Additionally in the next financial year we will:

- continue the roll-out of fibre to remaining municipal offices, clinics and libraries including CCTV sites;
- ensure that all General Workers are trained in Basic Computer Skills;
- develop a IT Metropolitan Strategic Plan;
- continue to pursue the Turnaround Strategy for the Vereeniging Fresh Produce Market ensure that the Vereeniging Free Produce Market in partnership with the Department of Agriculture.

- render CCTV maintenance and repairs service;
- facilitate and coordinate internal and external HIV&AIDS and TB mainstreaming. (On the subject of HIV & Aids one confusing issue that needs clarification is the statistics of prevalence, versus incidence versus deaths) The reduction in the number of deaths is mainly as a results of the effectiveness of the ARV programmes we have instituted. Also the reduction in the incidence rate is a sign that our education programmes are yielding benefits.
- We will also review and update the Sedibeng Disaster Management Plan;

On **GOOD AND FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE GOVERNANCE** we are pleased to report that for the previous financial year, we became the first Municipality in the Gauteng Province to achieve a 'Clean Audit' status. Moving forward we will:

- Review the regional tariff and funding model for migration towards a Metropolitan Municipality
- Ensure and maintain firmer internal controls;
- Conduct risk assessment of asset base;
- Promote Local BEE suppliers and SMME's in the region;

- Simplify Supply Chain Management Policy and Procedures;
- Entrench operationalization of the e-Performance Management System to inculcate a culture of high performance;
- Implement the approved risk-based annual internal audit plan to ensure compliance and good governance;
- Ensure implementation of the Anti-fraud and Corruption Plan;

**OnDEEPENING DEMOCRACY:** Our SoDA and extensive stakeholder engagements continue to be our flagship projects for stakeholder engagements. Moving forward we will:

- Monitor and evaluate the performance of Council and enhance accountability;
- Co-ordinate the Mayoral Investment Council and the Sedibeng United Business Forum Programmes;
- Ensure effective public participation in the processes leading to a single local government system;
- Ensure that all oversight Committees such as the Audit Committee and the Municipal Public Accounts Committee are fully functional and responsive;
- Ensure continuous communication with stakeholders at all times through various mechanisms and media.

## **BUDGET OF SEDIBENG DISTRICT**

For all our successes and achievements, there is so much more that we wish to do for our communities.

While better planning, increased productivity and better allocation of resources, increased value for services procured, are aspects within our control, there remains one major obstacle that we at Sedibeng have very little control over.

Our Budget as a District Municipality is highly restricted. We are a grant dependant Municipality. There is little credit control that we can enforce to increase our revenue.

The increase in our equitable share has been growing at an average of 2.5% per annum.

The increases in running costs of our municipality, including the increase in salaries which are negotiated nationally by the Bargaining Council, is around 8% per annum.

In simple terms, without any additional added expenses, our expenditure is catching up with our income every year. If we do nothing our expenses will overtake our income and we will be bankrupt.

In order to survive this scenario, the Sedibeng District Municipality has cut its staff through natural attrition by over 120 personnel over the last 3years.

And with no signs of National Treasury increasing our equitable share to match actual annual increases, we have to continue our moratorium on filling of vacancies. Even new attrition posts are filled selectively.

Therefore the 2014/2015 Budget that we have just approved today, the following is notable:

- We have budgeted based on an assumed 5.4% Consumer Price Index rate of inflation.
- Our Equitable Share income will be R239m
- We will receive grants of R1,2m for Financial Management, R,9m for Municipal Systems Improvements, and R1,m for Public Works .

- With the Neighbourhood Grant migrating to our locals, the Sedibeng District will close of current projects through a grant of R1,3m.
- We will still receive our HIV & Aids grant of R6,6m which is disbursed via our local municipalities.

The Capital Budget we have approved amounts to R17,2 million.

Of the R348m Operating Revenue, we have balanced out our budget with a surplus of R40,000.00 to our Operating Expenditure.

## **CONSOLIDATED BUDGET OF SEDIBENG DISTRICT AND ITS LOCALS**

As we move closer and closer to the Vaal Metro, we begin to realise the value of our consolidated budgets.

Collectively, we financial impact on our region is much more significant.

When one adds the Operating Revenue of the four municipalities, the Municipalities of Sedibeng and Its three Locals, Emfuleni, Midvaal and Lesedi will manage an Operating Revenue of R6,6 billion

The Capital Expenditure when consolidated will be just over half a billion rand.

During Mayor Hlongwane's State of the Municipality Address in 2 days from now, she will share with the people of Emfuleni issues in the following three Key Issues:

- Creating Economic Opportunities that include several new malls where possible to plug the economic bleed.
- Improving revenue operations and in billing.
- Improve social and economic development network as well as rendering of traditional municipal services of water and electricity.

We also hope to hear much more about one of the longest water canals that is being constructed in Sebokeng.

## **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

Madam Speaker, As we move toward the Vaal metro in 2016, we aim to have a better coordinated relationship with the rest of the world. In the last year we have seen huge interest from China in developments and investments in our Region. Through the efforts of our Consul General in Milan, Italy, on 26 February this year, I concluded a twinning agreement with a Municipality called Volta Mantovana in Italy. Since then there has already been exchanges on promotion and marketing of local wines and on tourism promotion.

Over the last Twenty Years between the Sedibeng District and its local municipalities a wide variety of cooperation agreements have been concluded.

Many of these potentially useful agreements are laying dormant and need to be activated and revived. From the cities of Eindhoven and Tilburg in Holland to cities in China and the United Kingdom, we have partners that can enrich our global reach and culture. In the next few weeks we will appoint an International Relations Coordinator to drive this programme.

## **PART FIVE – TOWARDS THE METRO**

***Abraham Lincoln said .....“The Best way to Predict The Future is to Create It”***

There is no better opportunity for the people of Sedibeng to create their future, than the opportunity that presents itself at this point in time.

Let me take you back to my State of the District address exactly a year and one day ago last year. During that address I said, “The pronouncement of the MDB in July or August this year( that is 2013) , has only 2 possible outcomes. It is either we remain as a District or that proposal number DEM 4059/3 is confirmed. This will bring about a dramatic alteration of our form, the Sedibeng District will disappear.”

Indeed the MDB announced on 15 October 2013, that the merger of the Sedibeng District, the Emfuleni and the Midvaal Local Municipalities into a single Metropolitan municipality. This included the migration of the Lesedi Local Municipality to the Ekurhuleni Metro.

What we had waited for with such great anticipation was finally realised.

The rhetoric around the move to a Metro gave way to a new reality when on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014, The Section 14 (5) Notice was published in the Provincial Gazette Extraordinary.

This Notice formalized the directive towards the establishment of the Vaal Metropolitan municipality. It outlined the structures, committees to be set up, their membership, term of office, leadership and functions, its operationalization, appointment of Transformation Manager, and financial arrangements.

If you needed a glimpse of the future of Local Government in Sedibeng, you needed to be amongst those that gathered at the Emerald Conference Centre on 16 April 2014 as the first Joint Sitting of the municipalities of Sedibeng, Midvaal and Emfuleni met to begin the process of the transition to a Metro.

There are many who think that this transition to the Metro is a plunge into the dark unknown for local government in this region.

Allow me to allay any fears in that respect by spelling out what will happen in months ahead, and well before we reach the much anticipated 'Day One' of the new Metro in 2016.

The transition will take place in three distinct phases.

The Sedibeng District Municipality, as the coordinating municipality towards the establishment of the metropolitan municipality, has together with our Anchor municipality of Emfuleni Local Municipality prepared a comprehensive project plan towards the amalgamation process.

The plan encompassed total compliance with relevant legislation, consultation processes to be undertaken.

The three phases are:

- The Incubation/Preparation Phase
- The Transition / Establishment phase, and
- The Consolidation phase.

The following committees are currently being established, namely, the Political Steering Committee and the Technical Steering Committee.

These Committees may establish sub-committees/task teams from their own members as it may deem necessary for proper performance of its functions and dissolve such sub-committees at any time.

The nuts and bolts, and the detail in which the devil often resides, will be dealt with in work-streams that will process all issues until we get to 'Day One'

These Work-streams include:

Work-stream 1: Human Resources and Change Management

Work-stream 2: Integrated Planning (Urban Development Planning)

Work-stream 3: Finance and ICT

Work-stream 4: Governance and Legal

Work-stream 5: Communication and Stakeholder Management

Work-stream 6: Service Delivery Integration

And Rapid Response Team to deal with urgent interventions.

Representatives on this committee will include a soon to be appointed Transformation Manager as well as all our Municipal Managers and other officials from the Provincial Government.

Madam Speaker, honoured guests, the notion that we are plunging into the dark unknown without any plan whatsoever, is far from the truth. I have taken to spell out the details to share with you the extensive time and thought that has gone into this journey ahead.

The timeframes and milestones have already been set.

The past elections have interrupted our transition processes. We can assure the new MEC for CoGTA in the Gauteng Province that we are waiting and ready to roll out our transition process.

One of the commitments that we have made, is that we will keep our communities informed all along the way as we get to the new Metro in 2016.

Let us not forget why we supported and lobbied for a move to a Metro. Let me reiterate the benefits of the Metro system of governance:

- The budget allocation to the Vaal Metro by the National Fiscus will be substantial as compared to what is being received by all of the Municipalities under the current dispensation. METROS RECEIVE THE HIGHEST FUNDING.
- Amongst further benefits on becoming a Metropolitan Municipality would also include:
  - Reduction of four Executive Mayors to only ONE EXECUTIVE MAYOR.
  - Reduction of SENIOR MANAGERS
  - No confusion in the minds of residents as to who is their local Council as there will be only ONE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY.
  - Improved provision of SERVICE DELIVERY to our communities
  - Increased allocation for CAPITAL EXPENDITURE
  - JOB CREATION on a sustainable scale
  - Greater MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT allocation for roads and storm-water

- Accelerated ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT for the entire Region
- Accelerated ERADICATION OF INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS.
- Receiving ACCREDITATION AS A PROVIDER FOR HOUSING for qualifying South African Citizens

As Abraham Lincoln advised ... I repeat what I said earlier, .....*“The Best way to Predict The Future is to Create It”* . We are creating our new Metro, day by day and block by block.

## **PART SIX – CONCLUSION**

As I conclude this address, Madam Speaker, Honoured Guests  
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I call on all the business community of Sedibeng to forge the partnership that is so analytically described in the Goldman Report.

I call on you to work together for the greater good of our future Metro as typified by the vision of Tata Mandela.

I call on every civil servant and Councillor in Sedibeng to serve the people of this District with the greatest effort and care in the spirit of Batho Pele. In his Inauguration Address 4 days ago, President Jacob Zuma told the nation quite frankly that, To enable us to achieve our key objectives, the performance of the state will need to improve.

It is only if we work together, bound by a common vision to take our region further towards a shared prosperity, will be succeed.

In urging this pact, I recall the words of the Japanese poet Ry-Uno-Soo-ke Sotorowho said;

***“Individually we are one drop. Together we an ocean”***