STATE OF THE DISTRICT ADDRESS

THEME: "District on the rise: Promoting Solidarity and Equality for Sustainable Development"

Madan Speaker Honourable Moipone Modikeng
Executive Mayors of local municipalities;
Members Mayoral Committees;
Whip of Council, Honourable Mamohale Moloi
Leaders of political parties in Council, Coalition Partners
Chairperson of MPAC;
Honourable Councillors
Administration
Vaal, Special Economic Zone Xola Sithole
Leadership of African National Congress and other political parties
Leadership of Labour formations
Deputy Commissioner Brigadier Nkwasho
Leaders of faith-based organisations, People with Disabilities, women and youth
Business chamber, and entrepreneurs
Distinguished guests,
Fellow Citizens of Sedibeng

"Dumelang, sanbonani, good morning"

Preamble

Madam Speaker; let me take this opportunity to express my humble gratitude for this privilege to present this address to the august house, stakeholders and the public at large.
Before, I dwell into the business of the day; I thought it is proper and prudent that I acknowledge that we are in the winter season.

Cold fronts, we are told; are coming thick and fast in the coming weeks. We are also been alerted that there are eminent increases in numbers of people suffering from Common Cold and Influenza (Flu); with Covid-19 new variant strain been monitored.

Distinguished guests, I therefore take this opportunity to encourage all people, in particular; the elderly, children and those who are immune-compromised; to wear warm clothes, stay indoors as much as possible, start using masks when outside their home and sanitise.

Covid has taught us that it is no a shame or embarrassment to always wear a mask. That is one of the ways to reduce infections to or from individuals.

Additionally, I would like to use this occasion to express our sincere condolences to all the families in KZN and the neighbouring areas who have been impacted by the recent unfavourable environmental conditions that they have had to deal with. “Re re Phephi”

For our most vulnerable, as well as for women and children in general, gender-based violence remains a nightmare. Thus, let's all grit our teeth, exercise caution, and notify the appropriate law enforcement of any GBV incidents.

People of Sedibeng, sixty percent of HIV infections in South Africa occur in Gauteng and KZN, according to current data. As a result, we strongly advise everyone to prevent HIV infection at all costs and to seek medical attention and support right away if they are already afflicted.

Madam Speaker, criminal activity in our district is still on the rise, depriving our people of their hard-won rights to privacy, safety, and freedom of movement. In order to help our law enforcement agencies combat this disease, we advise people and communities to exercise caution.

Honourable members of this house, we are sitting here now in June, which is a very significant historical period in South Africa. In June 1976, young people took on the challenge of revolutionising the existing quo.

The Apartheid regime's treatment of Africans, particularly blacks, fuelled the bubble, and a flood of young people flocked to the streets to oppose the Apartheid Government's modus operandi, which was geared and rigidly focused on isolating the black population in favour of white polulation.

Madam Speaker, in the spirit of the "The District on the rise: Promoting Solidarity and Equality for Sustainable Development", let me congratulate Midvaal for their achievement of Auditor General Clean Audit. At the same time heaping praise to Emfuleni for their third position in the recently held SALGA Awards.

I, therefore, people of Sedibeng, believe and am sure everyone else also believe that through Solidarity, we can learn one or two things from best practices by other municipalities within the region/district.

We are now enjoying freedom, thanks in part Madam Speaker, to the youth's resilience and daring in overthrowing the then-biased government practices. Today, we applaud the past youth for their steadfast resilience, courage, and foresight.

To today's youth, we understand that sufficient funding has not been provided for you; but, the government, is concerned about your predicament, and you will reap the benefits shortly.
We congratulate the youth who took their matriculation examinations late last year and passed. We tell them the sky is the limit and that they must pursue their ambitions and whatever their hearts desire.

The people of Sedibeng, I am proud to congratulate all our sporting heroes and heroines in all sporting codes; who made us proud and hoisted the country flag high. I am talking about the Proteas who claimed their World Cup trophy, Bafana Bafana under 20; who also qualified for the World Cup. Our athletes who continue to make their mark in the tracking fields; and lastly Mamelodi Sundowns as they wrote the history by becoming the first African team to beat a European team in a competitive match. If I had forgotten some, my apologies as our country seems to be doing well in sports.

Global, National and Provincial Context

Madam Speaker; we are presently living in a fast shifting global and national socioeconomic landscape. This necessitates agility, responsiveness, focus, and progress in our approach.
In November 2025, South Africa will host the G20 Summit. Sedibeng will profit from the Summit's spin-offs, particularly in the tourism sector, as well as other economic benefits. As a result, the district must prepare for future foreign direct investments through the district SEZ and other forums, including the corporate and private sectors. Distinguished guests- Climate change is here, and it affects every

country. However, people in the poorest countries, as well as impoverished populations in richer countries, are more likely to bear the brunt of the consequences of climate change.

Over the last decade, South Africa has faced a significant amount of energy inadequacies, including load reduction, power outages, and load shedding.

As an intervention, the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE) commissioned many energy efficiency studies in towns with the goal of reducing the energy burden faced by local communities, government departments, and the general public.

The DMRE awarded Sedibeng District Municipality R15 million for the financial years 2024, 2025, and 2026, at R5 million per year.

We have been actively engaged in the Energy Efficiency Demand Side Management (EEDSM) scheme since July 2024. We resolved to support local communities with service delivery and energy efficiency.

The anticipated electricity savings potential for traffic lights is up to 80%; for street lighting, 40-70%; for office buildings, 20-30%; and for pumps in water provision and treatment, 15-25%.
We converge under the "Theme": "The District on the rise: Promoting Solidarity and Equality for Sustainable Development".

This theme, we believe is underpinned by the 7th Administration strategic priority areas as articulated by our Honourable President Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa. The overarching three strategic priority areas are:

- To drive inclusive growth and job creation;
- To reduce poverty and tackle high cost of living; and
- To build a capable, ethical and developmental state.

Madam Speaker; the priority areas are strengthened by Gauteng's 13 challenges, as articulated by the Honourable Premier, Panyaza Lesufi, in his State of the Province address.

These challenges include water, cable theft and vandalism, non-functioning traffic lights, potholes, crime and lawlessness, the growth of informal settlements, electricity, specifically load shedding and reduction, an increase in gender-based violence and femicide, drug abuse, hospital and clinic services, a lack of schools, failing infrastructure and CBDs, and unemployment.

We feel that as a District Municipality, we can play an important role in ensuring coordinated and targeted efforts to address these concerns.

Municipality Performance

Auditor-General Audit Outcomes

Honourable members; We gather today to present what the municipality set out to do in the previous financial year (2023/2024); performance output, challenges and the way forward.

Distinguished Guests; allow me to present what the municipality set out to do in this financial year and the performance to that regard.

I am delighted to inform this House and the community that Midvaal Local Municipality received a Clean Audit, while the other three local municipalities received Unqualified Audit Outcomes.
Although other municipalities still have plenty of work to do before they can attain Clean Audits Madam Speaker, we are gladdened by the fact that no municipality has received worse Audit Outcomes.

While Sedibeng District Municipality works tirelessly to achieve an Auditor-General Clean Audit, we have regressed in the previous fiscal year (2023/2024), when the municipality received an Unqualified Audit Outcome with material findings, as opposed to the previous Unqualified Audit Outcome without material findings.

Governance

Distinguished Guests; we recognise that Councillors provide political leadership and direction for the municipality's policies and operations. As a result, all political structures, including Council, Council Committees, the Mayoral Committee, and Section 80 Portfolio Committees, are fully functional.

I hereby confirm that Council has established all committees and subcommittees to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of governance structures; and all are operational.

Ladies and Gentlemen: -The District Development Model is in full operation. All local municipalities have completed and accepted their "One Plan," and the Provincial Corporative Governance and Traditional Affairs has approved the comprehensive "One Plan".

The District Development, in the main is underpinned by the ward-based planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation; including research and development.

Hence Madam Speaker it is inevitably imperative that individuals/community members; national, provincial and local government departments; all civil society structures; business and private sectors must actively participate in ward-committees to enable coordinated and targeted service delivery.

I must thus underscore the need for collective strategic and visionary leadership among political and senior management levels to realise the objectives of the District Development Model. This Model, I believe is one of the tools which could foster Solidarity and Sustainable Development.

Madam Speaker; the municipality adheres to the principles of good corporate governance, which entails conducting business in an honest and transparent manner; thus, the municipality formed the Anti-corruption Unit developed Anti-Corruption Strategy.

To guarantee that the IDP priority areas are fully implemented, I stand before you to notify you, as promised in my 2022/2023 Speech, that the district has finalised the selection of all Senior Managers. The municipality has also developed and authorised its organisational structure, which is in accordance with the National Staff Recruitment Regulations 2021.

I can now certify that there is no need to be complacent in making strategic decisions and delivering solid, efficient, effective, transparent, and accountable governance.

For the year under review, Madam Speaker; the Human Capital of Sedibeng District Municipality consisted of 571 appointed staff, elected councillors, and appointed community members sitting on ad hoc committees.

Financial performance

During the fiscal year 2024/25, the municipality purchased products and services from over 487 suppliers totalling more than R27 million. This is an increase of 137 suppliers over the previous fiscal year.

Madam Speaker; about 37% of the total procurement of those products and services went to providers in the Sedibeng district. Thirty-three percent (33%) came from Emfuleni, 2% from Midvaal, 2% from Lesedi, 61% from outside Sedibeng but within Gauteng, and 2% from elsewhere.

It is encouraging to see a little increase in the number of youth-owned suppliers, as well as greater assistance and effort dedicated towards enticing persons with disabilities to engage in such opportunities.

We are steadily making progress with BBEE. Men-owned providers received 85.62 percent of the jobs, followed by women and youth providers with 28.43% and 10.58%, respectively. People with disabilities providers were granted 3.97%, township-owned providers received 24.96%, and emerging enterprises received 36.69% of the jobs.

The overall budgeted spending is R445, 108 million, with labour costs (R339, 137 million) accounting for 76% of the operational expenditure.

The municipality's 2024/25 operational budget resulted in a surplus of R974 000 due to the 5.01% wage increase of R13,079 million.

Distinguished Guests; for the financial year 2025/2026, the municipality's entire revenue budgeted amount is R446,081 million

The biggest financial contributors are grants namely;

- Equitable share (R320,303,000),
- Local government financial management grant (R1,500,000),
- EPWP Grant (R 1,884,000),
- HIV/AIDS Grant (R13,392,000),
- Rural Roads Management System Grant (R2,856,000),
- The Energy saving grant (R5,000,000).
- Agency fees (licensing service) (R95,263,000)

Honourable members; the 2025/26 Budget is negatively affected by numerous factors, and chief amongst them are following:

- We are a grant-dependent district municipality with limited revenue production functions.
- Our equitable share growth has been less than 3% per year for the last 13 years, while employee expenditures have climbed by 5-6% yearly.
- This year's equitable share growth is 3.41%.
- The district's unfunded mandates have a significant impact on the SDM budget.
- Municipal buildings, such as theatres and halls, have lost revenue due to dilapidated status.

- Capital expenses are limited to R8,145,738 with R5,120 million funded by the Energy Efficiency and FMG grant and the remaining amount of R2,025,738 funded internally.

Spatial Planning

People of Sedibeng; - The district is currently reviewing the Vaal River Spatial Development Framework. The Framework will focus on complementary development on both banks of the Vaal River, including the Vaal Dam.

Madame Speaker: - The district has created an integrated GIS with a dashboard that displays geographical data for all towns within the district. This is done to allow all municipalities to participate and make informed judgements on land planning.

Lesedi is the sole local municipality that is not connected to Sedibeng District Municipality's core ICT network. Additional money is required to complete this project.
Ladies and gentlemen, it is despairing to note that, as the manufacturing sector in the Southern Corridor has declined, the towns of Sedibeng have seen a major slowdown in economic activity, notably in Emfuleni, where manufacturing activity is prominent. This had significant negative consequences for the region's economic growth rate.

Local Economic Development
However, distinguished guests - in keeping with this year's theme, "District on the Rise: Promoting Solidarity and Equality for Sustainable Development." The district has collaborated with CoGTA and Vaal SEZ to develop Working Committees.

These committees are based on the economic priority focus areas related to the Vaal Special Economic Zone, which are Tourism; Agriculture; Investment; Skills and Development; Infrastructure and Logistics.

As I speak, tremendous progress is being made towards meeting the targets established for these catalytic projects aimed at reviving the region's growth.

Numerous community and stakeholder engagements have taken place, with more to come, to secure the socio-economic participation of Sedibeng's men, women, and youth in initiatives.

Ladies and gentlemen; -The district has provided feedback on the Draft Integrated Transport Master Plans (ITMP25) to the Department of Transport and CoGTA. This is done to account multiple modes of travel and new projects in the region, such as the Vaal Aerotropolis project.

This megaproject has the potential to generate 12 000 jobs during the construction phase and 6000 permanent employment throughout operation, with an estimated expenditure of roughly R28 billion. This aerotropolis initiative supports another mode of transportation in the larger scheme of transport planning, and it will assist address the socioeconomic and job creation obstacles brought about by de -industrialization and the closure of manufacturing industries such as steel plants.

This Vaal Aerotropolis project is planned to be realised within the next two years, and the necessary feasibility studies are underway. The Vaal SEZ is operational over three local municipalities, with the following catalytic initiatives across the three municipalities and the district:

1. Sedibeng District: -
    - Doornkuil for Agro City Development;
    - Vereeniging Fresh Produce Market to improve access to the market and address SMME challenges;
    - Government Precinct to improve access to government service;
    - Vaal Aerotopolis for International Airport dedicated to cargo and business hub;
    - Vereeniging Airport (FAVV) - Plans are underway to go for the Expression of Interest for entering into a long-term lease agreement for the management, operation, maintenance, and upgrade with the purpose of generating revenue for the municipality.

2. Lesedi Local Municipality: -
    - Aerodome as regional airport and logistics Hub- connecting the N, R and local roads. Both these projects have been initiated with the intervention of the province.
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3. Emfuleni Local Municipality: -
    - Vaal River City is currently progressing well and awaiting Module 7 approval;
    - Vereeniging CBD – a revitalisation of Business District to support economic activities and address social ills;
    - Student Accommodation in order to improve the social welfare of student and create vibrant economy;

4. Midvaal Local Municipality

- Doornkuil – a regional cemetery and landfill site development;
- R59 Corridor and Vaal Marina as Hydro City;
- All the above projects – EIA is underway as well stakeholders' consultations.

Tourism

My fellow citizens, the Sedibeng region, with its diversified tourism services and rich cultural and natural heritage items, has the potential to become a significant tourism destination; and the Sedibeng district has been categorised as an area with above-average.

To unlock and utilise the district's tourism potential, the Sedibeng Tourism Strategy was designed. Its projects and programmes are outlined in the district's Growth and Development Strategy, the Integrated Development Plan 2021-2026, and the district Spatial Development Framework 2019.

We, in collaboration with the Gauteng Tourism Authority (GTA), South African Tourism (SAT), and the Gauteng Department of Economic Development (GDED), have created marketing campaigns for regional tourism products. This is due to a drop-in economic activity in the region's steel and allied industries. Special attention is placed on the growth of township tourism.

We facilitated and coordinated the formation of a Regional Tourism Organisation involving Public, Private, and Community Stakeholders to build an enabling and facilitating environment for the region's tourism industry.

Transport and Infrastructure

Ladies and gentlemen; -The Vereeniging intermodal Taxi Rank phase one has been concluded and now operational and the processes of implementing phase two has started and drawing designs have been concluded.

In the same breath, Sedibeng District Municipality and Gauteng Department of Roads have entered into an agreement that has given the province the responsibility to negotiate, contract and appoint Bus operators on behalf of Sedibeng District Municipality;

We are currently implementing the Sedibeng District Integrated Plan (DITP). The plan includes but not limited to Commuter Rail Information;

We continue to manage and monitor Public Transport Stakeholders including Metered Taxi, Learner Transport Associations, Mini Bus Taxi Associations and Bus Operators and Passengers;

People of Sedibeng; - we have conducted a fully-fledged Transport Infrastructure audit with the CSIR and the report has reflected the state of the Taxi Ranks status in the region. Formal and Informal Taxi ranks status report has been concluded; and conducted transport needs assessment;

As we progress into the new financial year our priority will be on advancing the modernisation of our infrastructure mainly in the transport sector in order to provide improved services to all our communities in the Sedibeng region.

Working closely with Gauteng Department of Road and Transport we have identified key transformation initiative within the Sedibeng Region which will undergo imminent upgrades and enhancement to provide enhanced service delivery. Some of these initiatives include the Smart Vereeniging Intermodal Taxi facility due to be completed in September 2025 as well as the Licencing Facilities in Vereeniging, Vanderbiipark, Meyerton and Lesedi. All of these Licencing facilities will be upgraded to smart licencing facilities in line with the new Gauteng Department of Roads and Transport Smart DLTC model.

Distinguished guests; we are working with the National Department of Transport through its Road Agency Sanral in maintaining and rehabilitation of the National Roads, N1, N17, and N3 routes.
Sedibeng District, on an agency basis and on behalf of Provincial Department of Roads and Transport; runs vehicle licensing and operations.

Let me indicate that we have developed Rural Road Asset Management System (RRAMS), which is reviewed and compiled annually; and the data is upgraded every three years according to National Department of Transport (NDoT) funding cycle.

The data is then sent to Local Municipalities for implementation. This digital system help municipality to better manage their road infrastructure and develop preventative maintenance plans.

Human Settlement

People from Sedibeng; According to Schedule 4 of our Constitution, housing is a function of both the national and provincial governments.

However, despite the fact that the National Government provides funding for housing construction through Provincial Government, the municipality has assumed responsibility for coordinating the implementation of housing projects throughout the region.

Hence Madam Speaker, the municipality has decided to apply for accreditation with the Gauteng Department of Human Settlements.

Upon approval, the municipality will be in an advantageous position to receive the Urban Settlements Development Grant from National Treasury for the aim of providing sustainable human settlements for its constituency.

Meanwhile, Sedibeng District Municipality's function is limited to coordinating and monitoring human settlement programs. The municipality accomplishes this through the established Human Settlements Coordinating Forum.

The Forum is comprised of GDHS, the three local municipalities, and the district. The Forum examines topics such as housing, title documents, engineering services, land use applications, and so on.

Sedibeng District Municipality received funding from the Gauteng Provincial Treasury (GPT) to register and transfer Title Deeds to beneficiaries.

Health and Social Development

Madam Speaker: The health of the community has an impact on economically productive, active persons who contribute to the economy. As a result, the MEC for Health appointed the District Health Council, which consists of an intergovernmental relations structure and is chaired by the MMC for Health and Social Development.

The District Health Council prepared the District Health Plan for 2023/2024, which was adopted by the province. The District Health Council met successfully throughout the first, third, and fourth quarters of the year under review.

The District Health Council effectively formed Clinic Health Committees as follows: There are 24 committees out of 26 clinics in Emfuleni, 4 committees out of 4 clinics in Midvaal, and 7 committees out of 8 in Lesedi Local Municipalities, bringing the district total to 35 committees out of 38 clinics.

The District MMC for Health and Social Development, together with her counterparts at the local municipality level, paid oversight visits to Sebokeng, Kopanong, and Heidelberg hospitals.

They also visited Kookrus, Randvaal, Pontshong, Meyerton, and Lakeside clinics in Midvaal, as well as Retswelapele and Sharpeville MOU in Emfuleni. In Lesedi, they went to Ratanda and Extension 7 Health Facilities. The remaining will be visited throughout the new fiscal year.

The municipality developed numerous projects focussing on the specified groups, such as children, women and gender, and individuals with impairments.

During the Summer Initiation Schools season, Sedibeng had 14 recognised initiation schools and 27 female initiation schools. Emfuleni initiated 372 males and 249 females, Lesedi had 13 girls, and Midvaal had no initiates. There was only one (1) death incidence in Emfuleni.

Madam Speaker, youth, women, people with disabilities, and our elderly individuals are and should be our emphasis.

The municipality prides itself with the progress we have made in mitigating the plight of people with disabilities.

To this end, we collaborated with COGTA and the Disability Business Forum to establish the Regional Interim Disability Forum and Disability Business Forum under the Vaal United Business Forum.

We also conducted Disability Hearing in collaboration with provincial department of social development and local municipalities; facilitated sports for people with disabilities in collaboration with the Gauteng Department of Sport, Vaal University of Technology, and the Department of Social Development; hosted the Disability Sector Parliament: and collaborated with Shangrilla to hosted Disability Awareness Campaign.

Furthermore, the Department of Social Development funds six protection workshops for people with disabilities, five of which are located in Emfuleni and one in Lesedi municipalities; home-based care facilities for the disability sector include two in Emfuleni and one in Lesedi.

People from Sedibeng: This year, we mark the 49th anniversary of June 16, 1976. It is then our moral responsibility and obligation to equip youngsters with training options that will help them compete in the employment market.

The municipality has collaborated with many Sector Education Training Authorities (SETAs) to radically equip young men and women with skills, attitudes, and knowledge to take advantage of possibilities provided by the government, private sector, and other social actors in our region.

Indeed, this collaborative effort is in line with the 2025 Youth Day theme: "Skills for the changing world, empowering youth for meaningful economic participation"

Ladies and gentlemen, we have provided training interventions such as learnerships and internships to equip adolescents and women with skills that would help them thrive in their future aspirations.
The municipality partnered with the Higher Education Sector and the Provincial Department of Health to launch the "VUT Close the Gap Zikhala Kanjane" campaign at Vaal University of Technology.

We recruited 50 jobless individuals for a skills program (National Certificate in Plant Production), and they earn R 2 000.00 stiped each month; 140 students for a business administration learnership program and are been paid R 3 000.00 per month; 140 trainees with food handling and packaging skills who get R 3 000.00 stipend per month; 89 jobless individuals for a New Venture Creation skills program, which included a monthly stipend of R 2 000. 00.

We are facilitating the recruitment of 50 people in Midvaal to enable DFFE appointment of individuals for appointment as the EPWP to remove alien plants; while Lesedi is currently recruiting 48 graduates through the DFFE-funded Graduates Programme.

BoMme le Bo Ntate; - Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but also a prerequisite for a peaceful, affluent, and sustainable society. Commitment and aggressive action are required to speed development, including the passage of laws.

Gender equality and women's empowerment have gained great attention in South Africa's workforce, with concerted attempts being undertaken to close the gender inequality gap.

Women's access to jobs and positions is critical for development, poverty reduction, and gender equality. To acquire access and participate economically, socially, and politically, women must be capacitated and skilled.

In line with the foregoing, the municipality, with limited resources, continuously coordinates, supports, and implements women's and gender programming.

Distinguished Guests; - we hold our elderly people with high regard. Currently, the district has eight (8) residential institutions, with Emfuleni having five funded by the Department of Social Development, Midvaal having one, and Lesedi having two, one subsidised and one unfunded. There are four Home Based Care (HBC) facilities for older individuals, two in Emfuleni and two in Lesedi.

Disaster Management

Speaker: – We continue to assist families in distress and facilitate awareness and education initiatives in the Sedibeng communities via the Disaster Management service. During these devastating episodes, windstorms affected a total of 53 dwellings, with roofs blown away and others partially destroyed. The floods affected around 127 dwellings.

We and other relevant stakeholders continue to strive to instill a culture of risk avoidance, develop response procedures, and even share indigenous expertise in coping with incidents; thus, we undertook winter awareness programs; commemoration of the International Day for Disaster Risk and floods awareness campaigns.

Ladies and gentlemen; - the municipality collected 448 water samples; just 5 samples were found to be non-compliant, and appropriate interventions were implemented. Environmental Health Officers responded to seventeen air-related complaints, as well as 54 noise-related complaints.

We know that Sedibeng District was identified as the air quality priority region in 2009; due to its vast range of landmarks such as the Vaal River, Vaal Dam, Suikerbosrand Nature Reserve, the Sasol refinery, ArcelorMittal, and the Emerald Casino.

The district is South Gauteng's urban and industrial hub, with many sectors including steel manufacturing, ceramics and tile manufacturing, foundries, and so on.

The combination of industrial, domestic, transportation, biomass burning, agricultural, and other emission sources has resulted in poor air quality throughout the region.

As a result, Sedibeng has two ambient air quality monitoring sites, Meyerton and Vanderbijlpark. The Meyerton air quality station was turned off in the second quarter of 2023/2024 to avoid instrument damage caused by water leaks; the station lacks funding for maintenance.

Environment and Biodiversity

Ladies and Gentlemen; -We have a number of vital biodiversity areas and protected places that play an important role in biodiversity conservation, including the Suikerbosrand Nature Reserve in Midvaal, the Alice Glockner Nature Reserve in Heidelberg, Lesedi, the Kliprivier, the Vaal Dam, and the Vaal River.

It is consequently vital that the Sedibeng District Municipality draft a Bioregional Plan for the conservation of biodiversity in the region. As per the Biodiversity Act.

Public Safety

People from Sedibeng: - The municipality conducts Gender-Based Violence and Feminicide (GBVF) awareness and education activities. We hosted a stakeholder Capacity Building Workshop to teach GBVF Practitioners about detecting GBVF signs, with an emphasis on human trafficking. This was followed by an outreach attempt to educate and raise awareness about human trafficking.

We continue to ensure the safety of all schools in the Sedibeng region, resulting in a safe learning and teaching environment for our students, educators, and the surrounding community.

For this reason, we visited Ruta Sechaba Secondary School in Evaton, Jordan High School in Evaton, Ratanda Secondary School in Ratanda, and Phoenix High School in Vereeniging to ensure the safety of students and instructors at schools.

Rathanda Secondary School, Kgoro-ya-Thuto Secondary School, Mountain View Secondary School, Khanya Lesedi Secondary School, and Khudung Middle School have all participated in the cycling initiative. The notion comprises involving young criminals and parolees in order to educate children about topics such as pregnancy and substance abuse, among others.

We continue to attend weekly special joint stakeholder meetings and operations from the Justice, Crime Prevention, and Security Cluster, which includes SDM's MMC for Community Safety, as well as joint operations headed by the South African Police Services and backed by a wide range of stakeholders.

During operations, major target areas include stop and searches, roadblocks, vehicle points (VCP), high visibility patrols, patrols, tracking of wanted individuals, inspecting of enterprises suspected of dealing in contraband, and compliance inspections at liquor stores.

Sports, Recreation, Arts, Culture and Heritage

Madam Speaker and members of the House: - This year, we commemorated Human Rights Day in a remarkable way: UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation) declared the Sharpeville Monument Precinct and the Phelindaba Cemetery/Graves as World Heritage Sites.

The Sharpeville Human Rights Precinct includes the Sharpeville Police Station, where the massacre occurred, the Memorial Garden, and the victims' graves. This will surely boost the stature and profile of this historically significant site, resulting in an increase in tourism.

On June 17, 2025, we commemorated the thirty-third anniversary of the Boipatong Massacre by unveiling the newly erected Boipatong Memorial Stone.

People of Sedibeng: On November 29, 2024, the Minister of Sports, Art, and Culture legally authorised the geographical names in accordance with Section 10(2) of South African Geographical Names, renaming Houtkop Road R54 Duma Nokwe Road.

This is in accordance with our aim to ensure that our national heroes find relevance and permanence by designating or renaming some of our facilities and assets after them, thereby ensuring that their memory and contribution will always be perched in our communities' remembrance.

We held a very important ceremony in May 2025 i.e. the repatriation of the mortal remains of one of our very own freedom fighters, African National Congress comrades, Secretary General of the ANC (1958 - 1969), and the son of Sedibeng region - the late Cde Adv Philemon Pearce Dumasile Nokwe (Senior Counsel), who was born on May 13, 1927 and died on January 12, 1978 in exile in Zambia. Cde Adv Duma Nokwe was reburied in Westpark's Heroes Arch, together with the ashes of his beloved wife, Vuyiswa Nokwe.

Ladies and gentlemen: - Sedibeng District is the birthplace of basic human rights, with a rich cultural and liberation history. We must work together to preserve and promote the selflessness of the heroes and heroines who fought apartheid, violence, and racial injustice.

Our primary physical assets are the Vaal Technorama Museum, the Mphatlalatsane Theatre, and the Sharpeville Human Rights Precinct, to name a few.

We are in the process of developing a systematic programme to improve museum visitors' experiences, as well as public-private partnerships to rebuild and rehabilitate historic places.

We organised the "Show Your Talent Competition" in partnership with the "Show Your Talent" Group, Curro School Vanderbijlpark, Talent Africa, and DVB Productions School in Vanderbijlpark. The overall Grand Prix winners received a cash award of R10,000.

We also co-ordinated the Del Arte Arts Festival with the Del Arte Committee and other local arts and performing schools.

Ladies and gentlemen; - The municipality hosted South African Defence Force Veterans in the Old Jail in Heidelberg to commemorate the start of the South African Border War. Bosbok Aircraft, while committee members and the general public lay a wreath in memory of fallen troops.

In conjunction with the Gauteng Province Department of Sport, Arts, Culture, and Recreation, the municipality hosted an Arts and Crafts and Visual Art Exhibition.

The LEN KHUMALO Foundation Visual Art was displayed at the Boipatong Monument as part of the Gauteng Province Department of SACR's Visual Art Exhibition.

The Office of the MMC for Sport, Recreation, Arts, and Culture assisted the PAN Africanist Council in organising a Fashion Design event in partnership with the Embassy of Colombia, as well as supplying machines and certificates to designers.

The municipality collaborated with Emfuleni Local Municipality, Arts and Culture, Gauteng Province, Department of Social Development, and Khulisa Disability to hold the Khudafe Disability Arts Expo.
The town also hosted the inaugural Vaal Jazz Festival, the yearly Vaal Jazz Festival at the Vaal Technorama Museum, Human Rights Day, the Sharpeville Soul and Jazz Concert, the Vaal Comedy Festival, and the Film, Art, and Freedom Event.

Honourable Members, notable guests, and residents of Sedibeng; As I conclude, let me reiterate our steadfast dedication and support for you, the people of Sedibeng.

Over the last two months, we conducted extensive discussions with our community members, utilising open dialogues to better understand your issues, needs, and challenges.

Together, "The District on the Rise: Promoting Solidarity and Equality for Sustainable Development" will undoubtedly help us overcome obstacles. We serve with purpose.

Thank you for your patience, trust, hope, and participation in revitalising Sedibeng.
I thank you

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Lerato Maloka
Executive Mayor: Sedibeng District Municipality