

Acceptance Speech of the new City of Johannesburg Executive Mayor, Councillor Mpho Moerane, upon election into office in the Constance Conny Bapela Council Chamber, Braamfontein, on Friday, 1 October 2021

Madam Speaker

Chief Whip of Council

Chairpersons of Committees

Leaders of political parties

Leadership of the Government of Local Unity – the GLU

Fellow Councillors

Acting City Manager and the executive team

A special greeting to the residents of Johannesburg

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good afternoon,

OUR COMMITMENT

It is with great humility that I accept the privilege to be the lead public servant to the people of the City of Johannesburg.

I duly accept the vote of confidence in the newly sworn-in team to lead the Constitutionally prescribed developmental agenda in Johannesburg.

This is not a task taken lightly by the ANC-led coalition of the Government of Local Unity – the GLU, which is made up of our partners - the IFP, UDM, AIC, COPE and Al Jamah.

Together with the newly sworn-in Members of the Mayoral Committee (MMCs), we remain committed to finishing what my predecessors started in a bid to improve the lives of the people of Johannesburg.

The decision to keep the MMCs who took office under the leadership of the late Mayor Geoff Makhubo in December 2019 is meant to ensure continuity in the implementation of the people centred GLU priorities.

These are priorities informed by the expressed interests of Johannesburg residents and articulated in the Joburg Growth and Development Strategy (GDS) 2040.

TRIBUTE TO OUR FALLEN MAYORS

In his 4th of May 2021 State of the City Address (SOCA), Mayor Makhubo committed to rebuild and transform Johannesburg into a thriving City that we all aspire it to be.

He labelled the current governing environment amidst the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic – a public emergency that needed to be tackled as such in how we serve the people of Johannesburg.

Without wasting time, Mayor Makhubo had launched the 120 Days Accelerated Service Delivery Programme. He wanted to make sure that the City's service delivery foot soldiers delivered to standards and timelines committed to in their respective business plans.

However, we lost Mayor Makhubo in July 2021 – not long after he had launched the 120 Days Programme. In an attempt to ensure that service delivery to Johannesburg residents continued, the GLU remained intact and endorsed the election of Mayor Jolidee Matongo into office.

In just six weeks after his election, Mayor Matongo had won the hearts of many residents and councillors, including those from opposition parties, who hung their hopes on him to turn the City around due to his demonstrated commitment and work ethic as a leader.

Mayor Matongo was young, had a vision and all the necessary traits to lead a metropolitan City like Johannesburg into a progressive developmental local government.

He hit the ground running together with his MMCs, as well as heads of departments and entities through the heightened version of the Accelerated Service Delivery Programme from the first week in office.

Mayor Matongo also did not waste any time in demonstrating his commitment to public service by ensuring that we were all in overalls and on the streets of Johannesburg every week conducting oversight on service delivery progress.

The last Friday he had led us into Soweto where residents had started taking to the streets in protest against prolonged power cuts by Eskom, Mayor Matongo insisted that we go to the affected areas to establish why residents were left without electricity.

We visited mini substations that had either blown up due to illegal connections pressure or were vandalised resulting in the prolonged power cuts as Eskom had run out of mini substations to replace them. The following day – Saturday the 18th of September, Mayor Matongo had returned to Soweto for a voter registration drive with Gauteng Premier David Makhura and President Cyril Ramaphosa.

Together they had also engaged and assured residents that plans were underway for City Power to work with Eskom to replace damaged mini substations to restore electricity supply.

Madam Speaker,

A Memorandum of Understanding between City Power and Eskom is ready to be signed to resolve power supply concerns not only in Soweto, but also in other affected Johannesburg areas that include Orange Farm and Ivory Park.

All these new developments came as a result of Mayor Matongo shining the spotlight on the affected residents' prolonged power cuts concerns to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Work is already underway to also take over Eskom supplied areas in Johannesburg. However, to ensure continued supply of clean, reliable and affordable energy, the City has begun exploring alternative energy sources.

These sources include mini-grids, solar water heaters as well as solar PV generation, energy storage and natural power generation. All these initiatives come with job creation opportunities for residents.

Fellow Councillors,

It is still with a heavy heart that I recall how Mayor Matongo lost his life on the same day that we had returned to Soweto to update more affected residents on solutions and timelines to resolve their electricity complaints.

Indeed, we have lost great leaders in Mayor Makhubo and Mayor Matongo. May their souls continue to rest in eternal peace as we pick up their fallen spears.

THE CONTINUITY AGENDA

It is now upon myself and the newly sworn-in MMCs to pick up our Mayors' fallen spears and tackle the service delivery challenges that remain in the next 30 days of the ending Term of Office.

Madam Speaker,

The challenges are still plenty, and we are only left with 30 days to the end of the current Term of Office. Therefore, I wish to take this moment to recommit the incoming leadership to continuity of visible accelerated service delivery in Johannesburg communities.

As we continue to mourn the recent untimely passing of our Executive Mayor and comrade, we must be careful not to find ourselves paralysed by the trauma of his passing. We must pick up his spear and continue to accelerate service delivery across the City's communities in his honour.

Work is already underway on turnkey priority projects, which are designed to bolster growth and development in areas that had been neglected in the first three years of the ending Term of Office - under a failed opposition-led coalition government. These areas are Ivory Park, Orange Farm and Kliptown.

The ANC-led GLU has also begun resuscitating the co-production model of service delivery that promotes partnerships between the City and its residence in the delivery of basic municipal services and products. Our entities – City Power, Joburg Water and Pikitup have started to implement this model – which is a form of job creation for community-based cooperatives while boosting service delivery.

Fellow Councillors,

Since the dawn of the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown that has devastated local economies and livelihoods of many residents, the City has been rolling out relief programmes for ratepayers who are struggling to keep up with payments of their municipal accounts. Council even recently extended the Debt Rehabilitation Programme to December for qualifying ratepayers to apply for amnesty.

It is under the ANC-led GLU that the City resumed the roll-out of Joburg Free Wifi hotspots in the Braamfontein precinct and now also across Johannesburg townships to bridge the digital divide.

Madam Speaker,

Lack of access to the internet is a serious barrier to opportunities for many residents who cannot afford data costs. This is especially the case today with the new way of living favouring online interactions to socialise, study, search for employment or entrepreneurial opportunities.

We have also been opening new and renovated state of the art facilities such as parks, multipurpose centres, multi-sports centres, swimming pools, libraries and clinics, which are all designed to give access to communities. More facilities are set to be opened as some are still either under construction or being renovated.

Madam Speaker,

The vaccination drive of the City is also still underway with Johannesburg having been the first municipality to record over a million people vaccinated in Gauteng. However, more still needs to be done to dispel false theories about vaccination and encourage residents to vaccinate to protect themselves and their loved ones.

The City has also been hard at work to support small to medium enterprises in a bid to revive our local economy. This is while we explore the development and support of more economic nodes in other parts of the City that are located far from the central business district to advance socio-economic development.

Work to repair our roads is also currently underway in communities across the City – such as the patching of potholes, resurfacing and road marking.

Fellow Councillors,

The City belongs to all who live in it. The Constitution of the Republic is very clear on human

rights; No person, including the State, may unfairly discriminate against anyone based on race, gender, sexual orientation, and belief, among other personal preferences.

These rights are equally afforded to all of us as human beings, and there are consequences for those who chose to violate them against others.

Johannesburg remains committed to ensuring that law enforcement agencies treat human rights violations, crimes related to gender-based violence and all other forms of intimate partner violence with the necessary urgency.

As a result, our related support programmes across the City place victims at the centre of all our responses.

The City has also recently initiated a process of developing an exclusive programme dedicated to advancing the rights of the LGBTI+ community. A first ever LGBTI+ Discussion Session was recently hosted by the City in a bid to establish and address challenges faced by the LGBTI+ community.

Madam Speaker,

The list of work that the ANC-led GLU managed to kick-start in Johannesburg communities in the past two years is telling about our capability to serve the people of Johannesburg. Our task for the next 30 days is to ensure that there is more progress and continuation of the service delivery initiatives that are currently underway.

On the same breath of continuity, I will continue in my previous role as the political head for service delivery which was a task assigned to me under the leadership of Mayor Matongo.

Madam Speaker,

Despite the interruptions we have endured in the ending political term, we have made some remarkable strides.

The City has even already tabled to Council the first generation of the District Development Model in June 2021 – making us the first Gauteng city to achieve this milestone.

Working in unison with the national and provincial spheres of government is crucial for planning, budgeting and implementation. As it stands, our Integrated Development Plan and the Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan currently being executed are aligned to the District Development Model.

President Cyril Ramaphosa said earlier this week that we have made important advances, but much more still needed to be done. In our case, we still need to invest more in renewing, and in some cases, building infrastructure to service our growing population.

Madam Speaker,

The newly sworn-in leadership is ready to continue serving the people of Johannesburg – even if it is just for 30 days. To demonstrate this in line with being a responsive, effective and accountable leadership, we will be out in the CBD on a cleaning campaign tomorrow in response to a call from local residents about areas in need of urgent attention.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

From all the service delivery progress recorded under the ANC-led GLU, it is clear that we need a new mandate from the people of Johannesburg for us to continue accelerating service delivery across more communities post the upcoming Local Government Elections on the 1st of November.

I thank you.