

SPEECH BY CLLR MPHOS PARKS TAU, EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF JOHANNESBURG, AT THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE SOCIAL MEDIA WEEK, BRAAMFONTEIN, 26 SEPTEMBER 2014

Programme Director

Academics

Business Community

Officials from the City of Johannesburg

Digital experts

Students

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good afternoon

On behalf of the City of Johannesburg we would like to thank all of you, through Digisense, our partner in this Social Media Week event, for forming part of the Fak'ugesi Festival, which has celebrated technological innovation. Our involvement in this festival is testimony to our commitment to the on-going digital revolution, and in the context of this gathering, to social media.

Programme Director, digital technology determines how we conduct our daily business in the 21st century, including in the workplace. Our century is that of online shopping, online news, cellphone and internet banking, digital records as well as social media including Facebook and Twitter. As we all know, Facebook and Twitter have become world phenomena, enabling the establishment of social networks and the exchange of ideas, job searches, and the spread of the latest news and political debates almost as they happen. Social media have brought us here today and through the discussions, debates and workshops which have dominated this Media Festival Week, we have explored ways and means in which social media can be used to further enhance our lives.

Social media has rapidly made telephonic communication between ordinary people simple and widespread. Even business transactions are now done through cellphone technology. Thus today's economic growth falls squarely in the lap of digital technology. Education related sessions like this Social Media Week, initiated by Digisense in partnership with us in the City of Johannesburg, are essential for our country's economic development.

Nowadays a responsive, accountable, efficient and productive metropolitan government can only be all these things through the use of digital technology, which enables us to provide better service delivery and quality of life for our residents. This is what we are about as the City of Johannesburg - a city that has embraced digital technology, in building the country's, the continent's and the world's rapidly-growing collaborative economy.

As the City we are using digital technologies and social media to drive the local economy through job creation, entrepreneurialism, and support for SMMEs. In that way, we are technologically empowering our citizens, not least our own City employees. By doing so, we are bridging the digital

divide whilst ensuring service delivery and bringing about the Smart City to which we are committed. I would like to highlight some of the City's projects to show our commitment to digitization.

We are working closely with the Wits University in setting up the Tshimolong Precinct. This project is aimed at developing a creative space for the development of ICT software and skills, as well as innovation and job creation.

We are also involved in the establishment of Techno Hubs, in partnership with the Gauteng Provincial Government. These are multipurpose community centres where citizens interact with technology, and access free Wi-Fi connection and internet services.

We have recently launched an E-health pilot project at Slovoville Clinic to digitize patients' records. The aim is to bring about a single, complete body of records about patients, accessible to all health practitioners in both the public and private sectors.

Through a new socio-economic development programme, Jozi@work, the City has opened up opportunities for cooperatives in all our 130 wards to offer services that will assist us to enhance service delivery. We hope to contract some ICT and digital services from the pool of tech-savvy citizens among these cooperatives to spread digital knowledge and skills amongst our people.

Another of our projects is the digital ambassadors' programme, which is set to contract 3,000 young people to provide digital literacy training to deprived communities within the City.

The City of Johannesburg is trailing a Citizen Engagement Platform which provides mobile application services that revolutionize interactions between it and the citizens. Through this software, one can receive personalized notifications based on one's profile, and report, track and get support with city services like power, water, sanitation and roads. Other features include a handy list of emergency numbers and an option to chat to a live service assistant.

As the City we are part of a number of media social platforms, responding and attending to queries on a range of issues affecting our citizens. We are proud of our 100% response rate.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are moving with great speed in turning this City into a great 21st century metropolis.

In closing, once more I would like to thank all of you, academics, digital experts, business community, researchers and our youth for being with us throughout this week as we navigate the digital innovation waters. You have all demonstrated during this Social Media festival that you are connected by the passion for innovation, future thinking and a desire to collaborate and learn about the endless potential of social media and digital technology.

During this festival we have all shared the most meaningful ideas, trends, and best practices with regard to social media's impact on business, society, and culture. I have no doubt that existing SMMEs or youth-based service organisations will use this opportunity to access new audiences and will be able to provide better services to meet their needs. Throughout the week, we have explored the impact, benefits and endless potential of social media's presence in our everyday lives, along with the many innovations and approaches that some of the world's leading organisations have developed.

Let us now turn our attention to the Ventureburn Startup Battle, powered by Ford, where five promising start-ups will pitch their tech-driven business ideas to a panel of expert judges and to ourselves, the audience. Good luck and over to you Programme Director.

Thank you.