

DPUM Awards Ceremony

14 December 2011

Speech delivered by the MMC for Development Planning and Urban Management (DPUM),
Councillor Ruby Mathang during the DPUM Awards Ceremony

Programme Director

Staff members of Development Planning and Urban Management

Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me a great pleasure to be sharing this moment with you as we celebrate the best that Development Planning and Urban Management has to offer, and more importantly what the City of Johannesburg has to offer. The annual DP & UM awards were launched last year with the aim of acknowledging departments who are performing exceptionally well. These awards shouldn't be seen in isolation (exclusively for DP&UM) but as an achievement for the city.

The awards this year are special on a number of fronts:

I have noticed that each of us will go on with our daily work, occasionally producing exceptional results as we do so, often unaware of the impact of these positive developments. We thus never really take time out to reflect on the victories we have claimed. These awards are important because they force us to look at our individual performance and assess how much we have made a difference to the lives of people we serve. I like the nomination process initiated as part of the awards because it allowed each of your offices to sit back and take stock on the work you have done since January.

When we are dedicated and one follows up with an agency of the city to fix a pothole or the replacement of manhole (which may have caused a nuisance to a community for sometime) you surely have to appreciate your efforts in this regard.

Tonight's awards are particularly special because this is the last times we will hold the Development Planning and Urban Management Department Awards. As you fully aware, this year we have seen the establishment of a design option that will better meet the needs of the city and its citizens. This means the urban management function will no longer be part of Development Planning. It was widely agreed that the previous institutional model worked but Johannesburg is a dynamic organization which is able to refine specific areas of operation.

In preparation for the awards, I took the time to reflect on the good times we have had as a team.

I remember taking regional tours to each of the seven regions when I first became MMC for Development Planning and Urban Management. I have always welcomed these visits because they opened my eyes to all the many varied challenges that you face as Regional Directors together with the teams you lead. The urban management function is one that takes on many shapes in the different parts of the city and I truly believe that you have had to show serious innovation and creativity in dealing with each of your different challenges.

So, once again I wish to extend my appreciation for the excellent working relations in all this time. I truly believe that the relationships we have developed will work in our favour as we deliver to the people of Johannesburg in our different capacities.

Tonight, we are giving recognition to those who have shown commitment and dedication in making Johannesburg a city for all. Even though not all of us can away as winners tonight, you have definitely contributed towards making this city all the more beautiful, functional and a home to many people.

It is always a very difficult task to single out one directorate or region especially where circumstances and the availability of resources have a major impact on output and performance. Budgetary constraints and all other negative factors are important in singling out exceptional commitment and performance.

The three awards capture the essence of our work as a leading department in the restructuring of our spatially unjust city. I would just like to spend a few moments on outlining what each of the awards really measures.

The first award will be for:

- A Development Planning and Urban Management Unit that performed exceptionally well and presented the most visible results.

The planning profession and certainly work by Development Planning and Urban Management is often very difficult to measure in the eyes of our clients (the ordinary citizens of Johannesburg). This is purely for the reason that when things are not working then people will realize that something is missing. But, when planning and urban management is in place then people tend to be oblivious of our very existence! This is a difficult space to operate in, yet some have excelled more than others. Some have made such an impact that it is easy to see these results.

Secondly:

- A directorate/region/agency that did the department proud with regards to national and/or international recognition.

In recent years, different departments in the city of Johannesburg have been the proud recipients of many international awards and national recognition. Many a time, these come as serious surprise because we never pause and appreciate the value of the work we do. Amongst the list of projects or organs that have been awarded international awards I can mention Cosmo City, the Pennyville Housing Project, the Scroll of Honour bestowed upon the ARP in 2009, our corporate Geographic Information Services Department and most recently, the Johannesburg Development Agency, through the International Association for Public Participation

The third award to be presented tonight would go to:

- The most innovative directorate/region/agency.

Our approach to the problems of Johannesburg cannot be conventional, there is definitely need for us to come up with innovative solutions to our many different challenges. And very often, innovation is the simplification of the way things are done. At times too, innovation requires us to walk the extra mile and communicate more extensively with communities for their solutions to their problems. Innovation requires us to think differently about the solutions to identified challenges and this will ensure that we are on the path to a World Class African City.

I would be amiss of my duties if I do not take this opportunity to once again highlight the city's long term growth plan, Joburg 2040, and to request you to always place the principles of the GDS as your daily guide in all your work. At this point in time, given the amount of work that has gone into GDS and its Roadmap, all of us should know and understand how we will contribute towards the principles of:

- Eradicating Poverty
- Building and growing an inclusive economy
- Building sustainable human settlements
- Ensuring resource security and environmental sustainability
- Achieving social inclusion through support and enablement and;
- Promoting good governance.

I am sure that each of the recipients of the awards will continue to focus on as many of these principles for an even better product in future. Those of you who have not been awarded anything tonight, I trust you will look deeper into these principles and find your niche of service excellence towards the future.

I wish you to have a wonderful break and a happy festive season and New Year.

Congratulations to all the recipients of the awards, keep up the good work in making Johannesburg a world class African City.

I thank you.