

Key note address

02 June 2008

KEY NOTE ADDRESS BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF JOHANNESBURG AND CHAIRPERSON OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (SALGA), COUNCILLOR AMOS MASONDO, AT THE CITY OF JOHANNESBURG AND SALGA CLIMATE CHANGE SUMMIT, NASREC – JOHANNESBURG

Programme Directors

Madam Speaker: Clr Nkele Ntingane

MEC for Local Government: Qedani Mahlangu

Chief Whip of Council: Clr Bafana Sithole

MMC for Environment: Clr Prema Naidoo

Executive Mayors, Mayors and Speakers

Members of the Mayoral Committees

Fellow Councillors

SALGA National Office Bearers

SALGA National Executive Committee Members

SALGA CEO: Xolile George

City Manager: Mr Mavela Dlamini

Municipal Managers and Officials

Representatives of Non Governmental Organisations

Business

Distinguished Guests

The Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Programme Director, it is indeed a great honour and privilege for me to share this day with you and to be part of this very important occasion – the Climate Change Summit.

This summit is a historic event for us in local government. Many of us are somewhat familiar with the imminent threats of climate change. In these two days we hope to emerge from this summit even more enlightened about the implications of climate change, especially in the local government sector.

Ladies and gentlemen, global challenges are obvious to all of us. Do all of our citizens have sufficient access to drinking water? Can they breathe clean air? Is the soil that our food grows on prevented from erosion and toxification? Are our cities and towns resilient to disasters such as earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, tsunamis or fires? Do our citizens have shelter and jobs? Are our communities peaceful and safe? Do the ecological footprints of our cities altogether fit on this planet, meaning: are our urban lifestyles sustainable so that Planet and Earth can support them in the longer term?

Over the past weeks, the country and the province, with specific attention to Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni, has witnessed unprecedented "xenophobic attacks", which in this province started in Alexandra Township and spilt over into Diepsloot and other areas.

Whilst the outbreaks in the main affected foreign nationals, it is important to state that the attacks also affected South Africans.

Johannesburg has a long history of peaceful co-existence between South Africans and foreign nationals. For years, we have stayed, worked, played and worshipped God together. Ours has been and will continue to be an inclusive City.

A Migrant Desk was established in April 2007 to assist migrant communities to access essential services and information

This was done in keeping with the City's policy on managing migration. It seeks to ensure that all those who live in Joburg and abide by the country's laws are treated fairly and in keeping with the country's human rights guidelines.

What we are looking for are the "*best solutions*" for a challenge that may have dire consequences for our future if "*no solutions*" are found.

The numbers, the diversity and the quality of the participants at this Climate Change Summit reflects both the importance of the issue at hand and the realisation that a combined effort from across the spectrum of human activity is required to address this critical matter.

We are here because we identify closely with the theme of this conference, "*All hands on deck: Towards a low carbon economy*", which is also closely aligned with the World Environment Day theme of "*Kick the habit! Towards a low carbon economy*".

In line with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the objects of local government are:

- To provide accountable and democratic government to local communities;
- To ensure a safe and healthy environment;
- To promote local economic development;
- To involve community organisations, other stakeholders and communities in local government related matters and;
- To ensure that all this work is done in keeping with available resources and in a sustainable manner.

Programme Director, as local government, we find ourselves therefore in the frontline of implementation. As the sphere of government closest to the people we are primarily responsible for the delivery of the essential services such as electricity, water, sanitation and waste removal amongst others.

The cities and towns are not only concerned with local government environmental conditions, but also are also equally concerned about global sustainability. We are therefore called upon to make substantial changes in the way in which we run institutions and governance, promote economic policies and provide incentives, in social and behaviour factors, in advancing technology and knowledge.

The destruction and whatever negative implications on local government infrastructure directly affects local government's ability to deliver services to the residents. The loss of revenue and the cost of reconstruction can have serious consequences for local communities.

The root cause of climate change is the current patterns of consumption, production, trade and investment that are clearly unsustainable. This requires of us, amongst other things, to

have in place adequate disaster response strategies. This should be accompanied by advanced early warning systems.

We need to act to turn the world from its current path of unsustainable development. We need to defeat poverty and underdevelopment. There are complex links between poverty, wealth and environmental degradation.

It is the wealthy that produce the most waste, and consumes the most resources – in particular water and energy. It is therefore the wealthy that contribute the highest greenhouse gas emissions and lead to the negative effect on climate change.

In most countries, it is the poor who live closer to waste and mine dumps, who are forced to consume unpurified water, experience poor waste management, suffer from air pollution and live with sewerage running down streets.

At the root of these actions must be a fundamental change in the relationships between the North and the South. Africans have a responsibility to ensure that programmes that seek to protect the environment in the North do not shift dirty or unhealthy production processes to the South.

Widespread poverty, lack of access to shelter and safe water and sanitation, food insecurity, drought and land degradation are still prevalent in large parts of Africa and elsewhere. As long as these problems persist, and development disparities continue, a sustainable future for all will remain a distant hope.

In 1987 the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED, 1987) concluded that, *"a low energy path is the best way towards a sustainable future...it will buy time to mount major programmes on sustainable forms of renewable energy, to so begin the transition to a safer, more sustainable energy era."* The more efficient use of energy is often far more cost-effective than investment in energy supply expansion.

In June 1992 the United Nations, during the 1997 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Kyoto, Japan, formally recognised the effect of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions were having on climate change, and this led to the adoption of the landmark Kyoto Protocol. In 2009 a new Climate Change Framework will be negotiated in Denmark Copenhagen. This will put in place new targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and set specific actions to address the impacts of climate change.

Over the past years, South African local government has experienced an increase in projects aimed at reducing and limiting the impacts on climate change. These programmes are being implemented by municipalities in partnership with various other stakeholders.

South African municipalities in particular, have been part of the ICLEI's Cities for Climate Protection (CCP) programme, part of UCLG and UCLGA initiatives that seek to reduce local greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality, ensure energy efficiency and enhance urban livability.

The current discussions about alternative service delivery mechanisms (restructuring) in South Africa and the need to renew the associated infrastructure presents an opportunity to introduce a series of environmental friendly technologies and, sustainable changes. Some of

these interventions are targeted at the ageing electricity/energy, waste, water and transport infrastructure.

Given the reality of climate change, it is essential for cities and towns to pursue credible mitigation and adaptation strategies. These should entail the active reduction of carbon dioxide emissions by improving public transport; upgrading the efficiency of power plants; supporting renewable energy; and providing tax incentives for low emission vehicles.

SALGA is trying its utmost to balance the needs for economic growth and development with the environmental sustainability.

In Johannesburg we have an integrated environmental management approach that is based on our context and landscape. We view environmental management as an opportunity to advance sustainable development in the City.

For this reason, the City has an Environmental Management Framework which is our environmental statement of intent to providing our citizens with clean water, clean air, reduced land pollution and green open spaces that are ecologically functional and provide recreation and an improved quality of life.

The Environmental Management Framework is a response to a thorough analysis of the State of Environment Report, which evaluated thematic areas such as water and sanitation, air quality and energy, land and biodiversity. The method for analysing the State of Environment is internationally recognised and is based on the process of evaluating driving forces, pressures, state and impact.

Some of the driving forces and impacts that bring about environmental change in Johannesburg include:

- Rapid urbanisation and migration;
- Service delivery pressures on the City's infrastructure;
- High levels of pollution and fossil fuel burning;
- Polluted water bodies; and
- Massive generation of waste, all of which is threatening our biodiversity and compromising ecosystems functionality.

Indeed these challenges are not new or unique. Similar challenges afflict different cities across the globe. In this regard, it is appropriate to note the slogan "*think global and act local*".

In 2005, we concluded a pilot research project to investigate energy efficiency measures in water and waste-water pump. The study revealed that we could save as much as 10% of the total electricity bill if pumps are made more energy efficient.

Within the City of Johannesburg's waste-water treatment works we use anaerobic digestion instead of chemicals to remove phosphates from the sewer sludge. Methane produced during digestion of the volatile solids is used for power steam boilers, which heats the digester contents. The digesters stabilise the sludge, reducing odours and potential fly nuisance.

Our City's focus on climate change has been largely on reducing energy demand and a commitment towards reducing energy consumption over the next five years. This will

contribute enormously to energy efficiency and help to address negative climate change impacts.

Johannesburg is leading by example. We have already retrofitted some of the Council owned buildings with energy efficient lights. This project will help us to demonstrate to industry and citizens alike that energy efficiency can go a long way in reducing the City's carbon foot-print. We are targeting all Council owned buildings and street lighting.

We are increasingly introducing alternative energy sources in new housing and human settlement projects. In one of our integrated human settlement, Cosmo City, we are installing solar water heaters to more than 160 households and this will reduce energy demand.

Programme Director, long before the current electricity crisis became the media headline of the day, Johannesburg already had a strategy on reducing electricity. We had already announced our intention to reduce energy demand in Johannesburg by 25 Mega Watts by the year 2011.

This City is cognisant of the fact that Johannesburg currently consumes 10% of the approximately 37 000 MW of electricity generated by Eskom.

To achieve this saving, the City announced a number of measures:

- Supplying 300 000 household with energy efficient light bulbs over 6 months;
- Installing geyser ripple controls;
- Using solar power in traffic lights and public lighting;
- Installing diesel/gas turbines;
- Installing of solar water heaters; and
- Upgrading of the Kelvin Power Station Capacity.

We also announced our intention to introduce requirements for builders and developers to include energy saving measures in their designs and plans. This process will require changes to legislation as well as by-laws, guidelines and standards.

We are currently investigating a landfill gas to energy project at five of our biggest landfill sites, which will help to displace methane - one of the greenhouse gases.

In contrast, the northern parts of Johannesburg when looked at from outer space resembles a rain forest. The South on the other hand is denuded and dusty. We are reversing this situation by doing the following:

- To plant more than 200 000 trees by 2010;
- To green every soccer field in every township;
- To build more regional parks especially in the South;
- To establish nurseries and ensure that these help to reinforce our greening programme.
- To clean and green the Klipriver and all its tributaries by 2010;
- To leverage private sector resources and partner with many organisations to realise the goals that we have set for ourselves; and
- Since July 2006, the City has already planted about 40 000 trees.

Programme Director, the City's Air Quality Management Plan identifies vehicle tailpipe emissions as one of the most significant air pollution sources in the City. Johannesburg's transportation sector is one of the main contributors of both noxious pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions.

At local level oxides of nitrogen, fine particulates and hydrocarbons pollute the air we breathe, resulting in health problems for many people. On a global scale, burning fossil fuel releases greenhouse gases that will ultimately lead to climate change.

Thus the City is involved in both short and long term monitoring of vehicle emissions, and the implementation of programmes to reduce vehicle emissions. A prime example of a "*better public transport solution*" is the Rea Vaya Bus Rapid Transit System, which is currently being implemented.

This system will revolutionise public transport in Johannesburg and fit in with the broader transport picture of the region including the Gautrain, commuter rail and the restructuring of the taxi industry.

It is estimated that if 15% of existing car users who live within 500m of the Rea Vaya corridors switch to the new system, there will be savings of 382 940 tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂), equivalent emissions, by 2013. With the full implementation of Bus Rapid Transit it is estimated that the City will save 1.6 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions by 2020.

We continue to be encouraged by initiatives that are implemented by other cities and municipalities in South Africa to address the impacts of climate change.

Programme Director, I have briefly referred to some of the initiatives that SALGA and Johannesburg are involved with in our efforts to reduce the impact of climate change in our country. My colleagues will, no doubt provide greater detail during their presentations and in the group sessions.

I trust that this Summit will create a renewed awareness about climate change issues and how they affect local government. I trust that it will enable us to exchange information on practical actions to combat the effects of climate change and to share our experiences of best practice.

Let this Summit consider each question put before it carefully, debate and finally arrive at satisfactory conclusions.

Once again, on behalf of SALGA and the City of Johannesburg I would like to welcome you to this Summit. Thank you for your participation and express the hope that we will not only learn from our collective experience but also leave this meeting with a practical agenda on how to take the battle against climate change a few steps forward.

Thank you