Launch of the JCP Academy for Learning

02 February 2011

ADDRESS BY THE MEMBER OF THE MAYORAL COMMITTEE FOR ENVIRONMENT IN THE CITY OF JOHANNESBURG, CLR MATSHIDISO MFIKOE, TO MARK THE LAUNCH OF THE JCP ACADEMY FOR LEARNING, AS PART OF DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE AND PRODUCTIVE JOBS IN THE CITY OF JOBURG ON WEDNESDAY, 2 FEBRUARY 2011 AT THE JOHANNESBURG BOTANIC GARDENS IN EMMARENTIA

Programme Director, Mr Oscar Oliphant

Ward Clr

Councillors from the Section 59 Environment and Corporate Services Committee

Workers Union Representative, Mr Dumisane Langa

Johannesburg City Parks Chairperson: Mr Maropeng Bahula

Executive Director for Environment: Ms Flora Mokgohloa

Johannesburg City Parks Acting MD: Mr Geoffrey Cooke

Managers and Officials in the City of Johannesburg and Johannesburg City Parks

The Media, and

Distinguished Guests

Today as many of you know is World Wetlands Day. It is observed internationally to highlight the plight of our wetlands and to reinforce the value and benefits these vital water bodies provide, especially in flood-proned and low lying areas in the City of Joburg, that were recently affected by flooding.

It is therefore apt that we are gathered here on this very auspicious day on the environmental calendar, to announce the launch of the, Johannesburg City Parks Academy of training and job creation. The initiative stems from the award-winning Expanded Public Works Programme and is being spearheaded by the Acting Managing Director of City Parks, Mr Geoffrey Cooke.

The JCP Academy will act as an incubator for training, and small, medium and micro enterprise development. The first group of 100 youth will officially commence their training as horticultural operators on 3 February.

The three-year programme, will ensure that they 'earn while they learn', undergo practical training and become part of the permanent workforce at Johannesburg City Parks. City Parks will ensure that this project fills the gap left by natural attrition stemming from resignations in the organisation since 2000. The cost of the project will be absorbed by savings on the current salary bill and incumbents will be compensated at R2500 in year one, R3500 in year two and R4500 in their third year of training and development.

Candidates were selected from the City of Johannesburg´s Job Pathways, unemployment database and were further put through an extensive screening process, to ensure that they met the required criteria.

Mr Programme Director, I am hopeful that the seed that is being sown today will reap huge rewards for a bright future for our youth in Joburg. Our President has called for 5 million jobs to be created and this is possible if together with the private sector, we work towards supporting similar initiatives. We need to make a concerted effort as well to support innovation and entrepreneurship, particularly in the SMME sector. This sector, together with big business and government are the key drivers for economic growth, job creation, wealth creation and poverty alleviation.

Mr Programme Director, I also have a message for the very fortunate youth present here today, that made it through the gruelling selection process. You are the chosen few and you have earned the right to be here today. However with this right comes a responsibility to ensure that you are loyal, committed and hard-working to make the project a success.

There will be many after you, however you need to ensure that bar is set high and that the quality of the programme translates to world class service delivery after you graduate.

Programme Director, I would once again like to acknowledge the Acting MD, the learners, and the staff of the JCP Academy who have made this much-needed initiative a reality. The vision of the JCP Academy is to be the leading training hub in Africa for environmental sciences and SMME business practices, and I am confident that with the high-calibre of people championing this project – the JCP Academy for environmental excellence will become the heartbeat of job creation in the City of Johannesburg.

Thank You