

On the occasion of the first meeting of the Inner City Regeneration Charter Partnership Forum

07 November 2007

**OPENING REMARKS BY EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF JOHANNESBURG, CLR AMOS MASONDO, ON THE OCCASION OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE INNER CITY REGENERATION CHARTER PARTNERSHIP FORUM, EKHAYA PRECINCT, 30 EDITH CAVEL STREET, HILLBROW - JOHANNESBURG**

Members of the Mayoral Committee

Fellow Councillors

Members of the Section 79 Committee on the Inner City

City Manager: Mr Mavela Dlamini

Managers and Officials of Council

Representatives of Provincial Government

Representatives of Business in the Inner City

Representatives of Civil Society in the Inner City

Representatives of the Taxi Industry

Representatives of Informal Trader Organisations

Representatives of Institutions of Higher Learning

Ward Committee Members

Distinguished guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Programme Director, on behalf of the City of Johannesburg, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the first meeting of the Inner City Charter Partnership Forum. As introduction, allow me to say a few words to put this meeting in context. At the State of the City Address in 2006 we made a commitment to convene an Inner City Summit. This process got underway around this time last year. We established six Stakeholder Working Groups:

1. Economic development;
2. Social development;
3. Urban management, safety and security;
4. Transportation;
5. Residential development;
6. Public spaces, arts, culture and heritage.

We held four major workshops with each of these Stakeholder Working Groups. In the first round of meetings we asked stakeholders to raise their issues of concern. In the second round, we asked them to prioritise these issues. In the third round we proposed and asked for solutions to these issues. In the last round we looked at the first draft of sections of an Inner City Regeneration Charter that spells out our concrete commitments to solving the challenges before us.

Between the third and fourth round of Stakeholder Working Groups we also held eight (8) smaller focus group sessions that considered and discussed particular challenges such as bad buildings, street trading and how to ensure visible policing.

In addition to the formal consultation session in these Stakeholder Working Groups, we interacted directly with stakeholders or groups of stakeholders: with Wits University, the Johannesburg Inner City Business Coalition, with the Property Owners and Managers Association, with groups of businesspeople focused on particular concerns such as risks to 'business continuity given the question of disasters.

On 21 April 2007 we also held a special session with Ward Councillors and Ward Committees.

In all of these sessions we have listened carefully to stakeholders, considered the issues that were raised, grappled with complex questions and sought possible solutions.

On 5th May 2007, we met all the stakeholders who had been part of these processes again at the Inner City Summit itself. There were over 1000 stakeholders present at the Summit. At this Summit we asked stakeholders to consider a draft of the Inner City Regeneration Charter, a document that pulled together their concerns, and spelled out in concrete terms what we aim to do about these concerns in the years ahead. We had some intense discussion at the Summit itself, and we offered stakeholders the opportunity to make further written input to us in the weeks after the Summit.

The result of all these discussions is a final Inner City Regeneration Charter, approved by Council in July. This document is in front of you. Now, what is very important is that during this intensive consultation process, a number of stakeholders asked how the process of dialogue would be continued after the Summit. I am told that various stakeholders are saying that if there is going to be a Charter, there should be some kind of structure that allows all stakeholders to co-ordinate their efforts in an ongoing partnership to ensure that the key commitments of the Charter are actually implemented. We have responded to this valuable suggestion by setting up this structure: The Inner City Charter Partnership Forum.

In a few minutes, we will hear a short presentation on our proposals for how this Charter Partnership Forum will be constituted, and what role it will play. I would like to ask all stakeholders to think deeply about the proposed terms of reference, and to give us their comments in writing. We would like to hear your thinking on how this Forum should work before we finalise its mandate at the next meeting.

In our view this is a participatory structure that has the following key functions:

1. Firstly, it has to monitor and evaluate overall progress on action plans to implement commitments spelled out in the Inner City Regeneration Charter, whether these commitments have been made by the City or its stakeholders. We will be hearing a presentation shortly from Yael on what has been done over the last few months to implement the Charter so far. I must emphasise here that this is not an 'oversight role'. The City has established a Section 79 Council Committee to oversee the City's implementation of the programmes and projects spelled out in the Charter. It is the proper role of democratically elected Councillors to call City officials to account when progress is not being made.
2. Secondly, to provide a platform to stakeholders and enable them to raise issues of concern when they believe that enough is not being done. Our partners in implementation must be

able to say "lets not do it this way". So the second role of the Forum is to give stakeholders an opportunity to raise their concerns in a structured way.

3. Thirdly, we want this Forum to enable all stakeholders to formulate strategies aimed at problem solving. In an ongoing manner to identify and build areas of further common action and collaboration.

4. Fourthly, we want together with all of you to champion the Inner City renewal. Changing the cause of the Inner City.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Regeneration is happening! It is real! It is not a figment of our imagination. We need to remind ourselves of progress and acknowledge advances made thus far.

- Seven years (7) years ago there was no Mary Fitzgerald Square or Ghandi Square, no Constitution Hill, no Drill Hall development, no Bree Street Faraday Taxi Rank.
- There was no Nelson Mandela Bridge.
- There was no Brickfields social housing development, which many would agree has transformed the Newtown Cultural Precinct.
- The upgrading of the public environment of Braamfontein had not been done.

Let us also not forget that these kinds of developments are accelerating in many parts of the Inner City. For example:

- We are using the pressure that comes with the 2010 World Cup to impact positively on the Ellis Park Precinct, and beyond
- We also expect that the Gautrain will kickstart further development of the entire area around Park Station.

Yes, there are challenges but let us drive the process of urban renewal together. This Charter Partnership Forum is a critical intervention in this process. Together we will succeed! I thank you all for coming. I'm looking forward to very productive deliberations. Thank you