

Plaque unveiling

15 June 2008

**SPEECH BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF JOHANNESBURG, CLR AMOS MASONDO, ON THE OCCASION OF THE JOHANNESBURG ROADS AGENCY (JRA) JUNE 16 TRAIL AND EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME PLAQUE UNVEILING, NALEDI HIGH SCHOOL, NALEDI, SOWETO – JOHANNESBURG**

Programme Director

The Principal of Naledi High School Mr Kenny Maratalana

Deputy Minister Ntopile Kganyago

Madam Speaker: Councillor Nkele Ntingane

MEC for Public Transport, Roads and Works: Ignatius Jacobs

Members of the Executive Council

Members of the Provincial Legislature

Chief Whip of Council: Clr Bafana Sithole

MMC for Transportation: Clr Rehana Moosajee

Members of the Mayoral Committee

Fellow Councillors

City Manager: Mr Mavela Dlamini

Chairperson of the Gauteng Youth Commission: Lebogang Maile

The June 16 Foundation

Leaders of Political Parties

Leaders of various Civil Society Organisations

Managers and Officials of Council

Community of Greater Soweto

Distinguished guests

Comrades and Friends

Programme Director, let me begin by thanking you for the opportunity to say a few words at this important gathering. Today we cross yet another milestone, the third phase of the JRA June 16 Trail work through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP).

Today we gather here to unveil the plaque and to numerate work done to date in Musi, Madibane, Morris Isaacson and Meadowlands High School. Together we are here to recognise the excellent work of the veterans. What sets this programme apart is its innovative linkage of heritage and development.

The first phase of the June 16 Trail was launched on June 16 2005. This skills programme initiated by the JRA saw a pool of unemployed and unskilled women being trained and acquiring skills.

This training development has been modelled along the Expanded Public Works Programme guidelines, which require both theoretical and practical training. Theoretical training focuses on paving, safety management, kerbing, road marking, life skills and business management.

In his State of the Nation Address of February 2003, President Thabo Mbeki stated that: "The government has decided to launch an Expanded Public Works Programme. This will ensure that we draw significant numbers of the unemployed into productive work, and that

these workers gain skills while they work..."

Our programme includes an exit business training component, which helps trainees to form their own Close Corporations. Johannesburg Road Agency pays for the registration of the Close Corporations with the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) as part of this City's sustainable job creation programme.

Programme Director, the challenge of drawing significant numbers of the unemployed into productive work remains with us today, not only in Johannesburg, but also in all Cities and provinces throughout our country. But the challenge is not insurmountable. The JRA June 16 Trail through the Expanded Public Works Programme is pointing the way.

The need to create a match between the needs of our growing and rapidly changing economy and the skills of our workforce is not unique to South Africa. This is an international challenge. Every person, stakeholder, globally, is searching for a practicable implementable solution to train people for what the industry needs today and will require tomorrow. It must be emphasised that we cannot break the legacy of the past without working towards work and security for all.

The second phase of this project was done in partnership with the Provincial Department of Public Works. The phase marked the celebration of 30 years of the June 16 uprising.

At the June 16 2006 30th celebrations, President Mbeki and other senior politicians marched from this park to Hector Peterson Museum in memory of the students and youth of 1976.

On the 14th of April 2007, one hundred (100) learnership, fifty (50) youth and fifty (50) veterans successfully built this park – known as the June 16 Memorial Acre which was part of the 30th Anniversary celebrations of the June 16 1976 event.

In February 2008, we also saw ninety six (96) students, the majority being women, graduating. They were constituted of two groups one from the Greater Soweto and the other from Ivory Park. The Soweto group focused on the June 16 Trail.

The Ivory Park group, on the other hand, focused its efforts on building Footway Bridges. One of these, the Moses Kotane Bridges, is located at a spot where a woman and her child drowned during heavy rains in the year 2005.

Many of these trainees are now working with both the public and private sectors, They are making a positive contribution in the construction industry.

Let remind ourselves that tomorrow is the 32nd anniversary of 16 June 1976. This uprising remain a significant milestone in our struggle to deepen democracy, build a non-racial, non-sexist and a prosperous society.

Tomorrow's commemoration will provide us with a platform to reflect on where we come from, affirm where we are and indicate and focus where we are going.

We once again would like to take this opportunity and salute those who laid down their lives to enable all of us to reclaim our dignity.

On our part we will continue to seek and identify innovative ways of implementing the City' s Youth Development Strategy. We will do everything in our power to ensure that we make youth participation in development a reality.

Our memories of the heroes and heroines of June 16 will remain embedded in our hearts and minds forever. June 16 will always be celebrated as the day, which changed the course of history in South Africa. It untied the struggles of the people of South Africa and propelled the struggle to new and greater heights. Let us work together in empowering our youth. History demands it.

Thank you