

The following remarks were delivered by the Johannesburg Executive Mayor during a Wreath Laying ceremony to mark Youth Day at the Hector Peterson Memorial in Soweto. The Executive Mayor was joined by MMC for Social Development, Cllr Ronald Harris.

The Joburg Multi-Party Government co-hosted the day's events with the Gauteng Provincial Government, represented by Premier David Makhura and MEC Mbali Hlophe.

Premier of Gauteng, Honourable David Makhura

MEC for Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation, Honourable Mbali Hlophe

MMC for Community Development, Cllr Ronald Harris

Ward Councillor, Mr Lefa Molise

Leadership of the June 16 Foundation and Each One Teach One

Class of 1976 and their families

Residents of Joburg

We stand here today not only to commemorate the role the youth played in dramatically and purposefully shaping our Constitutional Democracy, but we stand here to reflect on the work that we, as Government Leaders, have to play in the development of the City, the Province, and the country.

Honourable Premier

Last night I spent most of my day in Soweto – in Dhlamini and just up the road from here at Sakhumzi on the world-renowned Vilakazi Street.

In both instances I was forced to and able to reflect on the sacrifices made by young people in 1976, and the responsibility that leaders in government have to the youth of today.

Late on Wednesday afternoon, a Joburg Multi-Party Government delegation arrived in Soweto to lend its support to the Magadla family, whose 6-year-old son, Khayaletu, tragically fell into a manhole that was not covered due to suspected vandalism.

As the City of Johannesburg, we have committed to continuing with recovery operations and support for the Magadla family until we have answers, regardless of the outcome.

We continue to pray for the Magadla family and the Dhlamini community who literally stand by the family every day, and until the late evening.

The family have prepared for the worst, but that should not abdicate our responsibility to the community especially the youth, who are looking at us as government – across all spheres – to create an environment conducive to creating long-term and sustainable jobs and opportunities.

MEC Hlophe,

The latter part of Wednesday found me sharing a platform with you, as well as our colleague from National Government, Minister Aaron Motsoaledi.

During this panel discussion we were forced to listen, acknowledge, and act on the cries and pleas of young people who are tired of plans, plans about plans, and cheap talk that does not change their circumstances.

The youth of the Province and Joburg are also not interested in us fighting party political battles at the expense of progress and prosperity.

MMC Harris,

The profile of Joburg means that the Multi-Party Government cannot repair and rebuild without the cooperation of colleagues from the National and Provincial spheres of Government.

I am happy therefore to state that on the strategic and critical issue of securing economic infrastructure, there has been a great working relationship between the City of Johannesburg and the SAPS as well as the Department of Community Safety.

Premier

I believe we need to work even harder and smarter to solidify and to be more precise about the relationship between the City of Johannesburg, the Gauteng Provincial Government and National Government, especially when it comes to serving young people by unlocking education and economic opportunities.

This City and Province are integral to the success of the country. To deny this would be naïve and unfortunate.

The youth of the Province and City are fast losing patience, and do not care whether a road, bursary or work opportunity are administered by this or that sphere of government; what is important to them is that government delivers.

We do not do ourselves favours by pointing at each other, in the same way that we are not contributing to the development of our youth by working in silos.

The class of 1976 who mobilised behind a united cause remind us that as government, even if we are at different spheres or come from different political parties, we must unite behind policy decisions and interventions that not only address current needs but also prepare us for future prospects.

For the City to survive for generations to come, we must invest in the youth.
May this Youth Day remind us of the path we have walked, and the road that is still ahead of us.

ENDS

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