Esteemed Mayors and distinguished guests

Dumelang, sanibonani, good morning.

I wish to welcome you to Johannesburg, a world class African City.

We live in a global world, which connects all of us, but we are brought together today because we are all on a quest to improve and humanise our cities.

This year's theme of "Caring Cities" is very close to our hearts, particularly us South Africans who bear the heavy burden of addressing the scars created by the Apartheid legacy in the racialised spatial outlay of our City, the scourge of poverty, hunger and a low quality of life still affecting the majority of the residents.

Post-Apartheid South Africa is a developmental state because the imbalances of the past have to be addressed. The paradigm adopted by the City of Joburg is that of developmental service delivery. The objectives are to transform the country into a united, democratic, non-sexist, non-racist and prosperous society.

After 2011 our current Mayoral Committee, led by our esteemed Executive Mayor Councillor Parks Tau, embarked upon an extensive consultative process including business, labour and the community at large in order to shape a City of the people.

This social contract is the Joburg 2040 Growth and Development Strategy. The strategy clearly shows that the people want a City imbued with Ubuntu. As developmental activists and champions for building active and engaged citizenry, we ourselves to the following outcomes:

1. Improved quality of life and development-driven resilience for all

2. Provide a resilient, liveable, sustainable urban environment – underpinned by infrastructure supportive of a low-carbon economy

3. An inclusive, job-intensive, resilient and competitive economy that harnesses the potential of citizens; and

4. A high performing metropolitan government that pro-actively contributes to and builds a sustainable, socially inclusive, locally integrated and globally competitive Gauteng City Region.

What begs the question is: can the philosophy of Ubuntu influence the manner in which we go about achieving these objectives? In my language Setswana, we say "Motho ke motho ka batho" which means that a person is a person through other people and that is the essence of Ubuntu. Some of us know what Ubuntu means without anyone having explained to us what it is and this is simply because it is a lived experience. During an interview, our former President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela described Ubuntu as follows:

"A traveller through a country would stop at a village and he didn't have to ask for food or for water. Once he stops, the people would give him food and attend him. That is one aspect of Ubuntu, but it will have various aspects. Ubuntu does not mean that people should not enrich themselves. The question therefore is: Are

you going to do so in order to enable the community around you to be able to improve?"

Ubuntu is a way of living humanely with others. Practicing it not only endows one with a sense of belonging, social justice, strengthens the sense of positive civic participation. It is a perfect companion to our values of democracy, the constitution, and the rule of law, human rights and the capacity and capability of forming social partnerships in order to develop and advance our City and therefore our country.

Bishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu explaining Ubuntu in 2008 said:

One of the sayings in our country is Ubuntu – the essence of being human. Ubuntu speaks particularly about the fact that you can't exist as a human being in isolation. It speaks about our interconnectedness. You can't be human all by yourself, and when you have this quality – Ubuntu – you are known for your generosity. We think of ourselves far too frequently as just individuals, separated from one another, whereas you are connected and what you do affects the whole World. When you do well, it spreads out; it is for the whole of humanity.

Executive Mayor Parks Tau espoused more values aimed at deepening the capacity and commitment to reaching the Growth and Development Strategy objectives and romantically reminding us that we can re-imagine our City to our heart's desire. That we can transform it through developmental service delivery; change the Apartheid spatial outlay by creating corridors of freedom in order to stitch up the City and make it accessible to all. Knowledge is power. Therefore local government is committed to stimulating a knowledge economy through deploying broadband infrastructure throughout the City and creating Local Special Economic Zones.

The partner in transforming our City is the resident. As an individual is part of greater society, it is also important to affirm him or her positively. What is the point of having all these great programmes without the main transforming agent – the resident?

Tambulasi and Kayini in 2005 champion the application of Ubuntu in harmony with democratic and good governance principles. Whilst we are on a quest to creating caring cities, I wish to urge all who are present to also explore the concept of Ubuntu because I believe it will deepen perspectives that will arise out of this session.

I'd like to conclude by saying that Ntate Mandela said: "You have a limited time to stay on earth. You must try and use that period for the purpose of transforming your country into what you desire it to be."

I hope that those who come from other countries will experience South African Ubuntu first hand during your stay in our country.

Thank you.