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The South African Municipal Workers' Union and the Independent Municipal and Allied Trade Union

Unit Heads of Directorates

Managers and officials of Group Corporate and Shared Services (GCSS)

Colleagues, the Strategic Vision of the City of Johannesburg is to continue to develop the City as a Liveable, sustainable and resilient environment positioned at the frontline of a developmental state in the Gauteng City Region. It is therefore important to look at the political imperatives and challenges facing our department because we are accountable to our communities.

As the African National Congress turns 100 this year, when our democracy is in its 17th year, introspection was called for. Revisiting the 2009 general elections, which the ANC won in the City of Joburg, it is imperative to always remember that the social contract signed between the citizens of the city and government was guided by the principles of:

Working together we can do more to address the challenges our city faces and that we need to do things differently to ensure faster change by adopting a business unusual attitude.

These two points of delivery are the main social contracts between what the City must do and what the people want. What can we do differently to ensure that our local government does things differently, in order to ensure faster change and deliver on our social contract with the people of Joburg? Before we can even begin to answer that question, let us be introspective.

I do not like to begin matters from a negative perspective, but today I will, simply because today's gathering is focused on putting us on a path to eradicate these negatives and challenges and build a public service cadre which proudly and efficiently serves the citizens of the City of Joburg. Why, because with our focused efforts, we can. But I am speaking ahead of myself.

A stinging observation about local government is that the main challenges of local government are: building an effective, accountable and clean government. This theme is echoed by our oversight institutions such as the Municipal Public Accounts Committee, Auditor General, the Public Protector and other commentators in the private and public spheres. The following are the challenges we are confronted with:

1. Nepotism may lead to the employment of unqualified staff;
2. some of the City's employees have interests in companies gaining tenders from the local government;
3. there is a frighteningly pervasive weak work ethic;
4. employees getting kickbacks for City business deals acquired corruptly by outside companies.

The challenges are not just limited to the behaviour of employees.

5. Limited and curtailed budgets also pose a problem for our departments' implementation of some of the actions they are meant to. For example, limited budgets mean that in some instances the City cannot send its employees on study tours and related learning experiences, thus restricting our human capacity and contributing to a weak or weakening skills base.
6. We have committed to maintaining a stable labour environment. The LLF, comprising of employers and organised labour sits regularly in order to deal with the challenges which arise in the City. However, at times we can be negatively impacted by the external environment, such as the wildcat strike at Marikana. We all know what happened and we must all take our lessons from that situation and work together to avoid highly confrontational circumstances which may also develop into high level conflict and employers having to implement unpleasant remedies, as per the prescriptions of the law.
7. Senior officials must also desist from giving labour information aimed at destabilising the City's employer/employee relations.
8. Inter-governmental relations are weak. This may impede service delivery.

The challenges have spurred the ANC to action, in order to realign the state institutions to fulfil their obligations towards the people. What tools should be used to ensure that government delivers more and faster?

A local government that ensures that there is equal access to employment and skills development prioritising women, youth and people with disabilities; which can work effectively with national and provincial governments; and most importantly always keeping within its sight and actions to realise the vision that the creation of a united, non-racial nation, non-sexist and prosperous society is a cornerstone of the values and principles enshrined in the Freedom Charter, which is the foundation document of the ANC.

The ANC mandate of local government will be monitored and evaluated closely and where institutions fail, national and provincial government will make interventions at the local level to remedy identified weaknesses. Monitoring implementation more closely, under the leadership of President Jacob Zuma, elected political representatives who do not deliver will be replaced; similarly, employees of the City who do not deliver will be replaced too.

In line with our democratic values, the City also undertook a consultative participatory democratic process, through the GDS in order to craft the vision and the objectives of the City, with the citizens. This consultative process birthed the Joburg 2040 Growth and Development Strategy.

How can we ensure that we deliver the GDS 2040 objective and establishing a high performing metropolitan government that pro-actively contributes to and builds a sustainable, social inclusive, locally integrated and globally competitive Gauteng City Region?

Without people nothing can be done. As the Mayor reminded us in the state of the City Address earlier this year that this “city’s greatest assets are its people.” Group Corporate and Shared Services has the pivotal responsibility to ensure that our greatest asset, our employees are always jacked up to deliver, work in spaces where their rights such as occupational health and safety, fair and competitive remuneration, a stable work environment achieved through constant engagement with labour, fairness and such related principles are upheld.

In return, our people must deliver what they are employed for in the City in a principled and efficient manner. Therefore, tools of performance monitoring, which are time bound will also be implemented to ensure that the City gets value for money and fulfils its service delivery duties for the people of Joburg.

We have to guarantee customer and citizen care and service and sustain a responsive, accountable, efficient and productive metropolitan government, because these are the most pertinent outputs for GCSS.

Let us focus ourselves on our City’s priority of human-capital interventions in the CoJ Group in order to contribute to the implementation of the Joburg 2040 Strategy and the financial sustainability of the City. This key flagship programme will be done through implementing interventions that will enhance efficiency and productivity and so improve service delivery.

One of our key challenges is corruption in the City. Corruption must be rooted out, all necessary efforts will be taken to rid us of this scourge which takes us backwards, undermines our efficiencies and results in service delivery failures, which in sum undermine the fulfilment of our agreement with the people of Joburg.

We are optimistic about the GCSS, we will deliver because we are the enablers of delivery who are absolutely confident that we can deliver.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, our socio-economic challenges which must be weathered down through our pillars of freedom, particularly those relevant for our role in governance of the City of Joburg, these are meeting basic needs and developing human resources, building the economy and creating jobs, transforming the state in order to build a united, democratic, non-racial and non-sexist society and a building block towards building a better South Africa, our continent and a better world. We must dedicate ourselves, as the servants of the people, to always be diligent, conscientious, dedicated and implement our daily tasks at hand with all our capabilities. In this manner, we will deliver faster and efficiently.

Thank you.