

SPEECH BY CLLR MPHONGA PARKS, EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF
JOHANNESBURG, AT THE GRADUATION CEREMONY, WITS
UNIVERSITY, BRAAMFONTEIN, 19 MARCH 2015

Head and Director of Wits School of Governance Professor Thomas Mogale

University Academics

Students

Ladies and gentlemen

I am proud to be standing before the City of Johannesburg's graduands who have made us proud by achieving their certificates in Local Governance and Oversight Programme.

Education is a crucial tool of liberation. Our stalwarts and leaders of the African National Congress including Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela, Govan Mbeki and many others took decisive steps to act against the apartheid regime when the Bantu Education Act was decreed in 1953. "The fight against Bantu Education must go on. We must build steadily, carrying the people with us, exposing the wickedness of the new Bantu Education syllabus and the way children are to be indoctrinated, achieving the boycott of the school boards and committees, adapting the form of protest to the state of preparedness in the area and the local conditions there" reported Oliver Tambo, who is quoted by Luli Callinicos in her book on our leader and titled: *Oliver Tambo Beyond the Engeli Mountains*.

As the African National Congress (ANC) and as government in the post-apartheid South Africa we were not only opposed to the mentally crippling Bantu Education but have done our best to ensure that our people receive the kind of education that is diametrically opposed to this inferior form of education. Prior to 1994, and as government in waiting, we sent our cadres to various institutions across the world to acquire quality education in order to prepare to govern our country once apartheid has been defeated. Therefore by sending the City's executive leaders to Wits School of Governance, we are continuing with the movement's tradition of ensuring that relevant and quality education is acquired in order to run the country in an effective way.

Again achieving a world class 21st century metropolis will be impossible if the City's leaders do not take it upon themselves to further their education. We need to play our part by acquiring education in order to transform our society and to create the capacity to respond to changes. We need to acquire education in order to positively enhance the lives of the City's citizens, improving the delivery of services, transforming our city into a developed economic hub. Skills acquisition is significant as the world we live in is constantly evolving and we are part of a global economy grounded on knowledge driving economies and many important elements of development. Thus human skills development is important in order to deliver services to our people and lead in development.

Through you Professor Thomas Mogale, we would like to thank the Wits School of Governance (WSG) for playing a pivotal role in restructuring public management and in building capacity for policy development and management throughout the continent. Most importantly, we would like to thank you for providing quality education for leaders and decision-makers in the public and development fields. For example, the certificates acquired by our graduandes in

Local Governance and Oversight programme will assist the City's executive committee members to carry out their mandate, bringing about effective governance and political leadership and turn our City into the world class 21st metropolis. Strategic partnership between the City and Wits University is really key in driving development and change that we all desire. In many ways, this [educational program] is one way to operationalize the MOU between the City and Wits University.

Lastly to our graduands -soon to be graduates in just a few minutes, I would like to congratulate you on your achievements. It is never too late to acquire education as some of our leaders received education while serving long and stiff sentences in notorious prisons such as Robben Island. I therefore urge you all to study further and to devote yourselves to more educational opportunities in order to be able to lead our City into the future. Let us remember the words of the late President Nelson Mandela when he said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world".

Thank you