



SPEAKING NOTES FOR EXECUTIVE MAYOR, CLLR. KABELO GWAMANDA

GREEN JOBS YOUTH EXPO, BRIXTON MULTIPURPOSE CENTER

23 FEBRUARY 2024

Program Director,
MMC for Environment & Infrastructure Services (EISD), Cllr. Jack Sekwaila
Johannesburg Student Council Junior Mayor, Arabile Maphiri
Director for Presidential Youth Employment Intervention in the Presidency, Tshego Walker
Sponsors, UK PACT, C40 Climate Leadership Group, incl. all corporates present & exhibitions
Schools pupils and teachers from Lufhereng Senior Secondary, Kwa Mhlobo Senior Secondary School and Tetelo Secondary School
University of Johannesburg and Wits University
Youth organisations, incl. representatives from various other government depts., such as DFFE and GDARDE.
Officials of the City of Johannesburg,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The City of Johannesburg is a vibrant and diverse metropolis that is at the forefront of sustainable development and innovation. As the economic hub of South Africa, Johannesburg plays a crucial role in shaping the country's transition towards a green economy. However, as we look towards the future, we see a world filled with challenges and opportunities. One of the most pressing challenges we face is the impact of climate change on our planet. The need to transition towards a more sustainable and environmentally friendly economy has never been more urgent. This, ladies and gentleman, is a climate emergency.

Today marks yet another important milestone in the history of the City of Johannesburg, as we host the Green Jobs Youth Expo, under the leadership of the Government of Local Unity (the GLU). Youth unemployment is a critical issue facing our city and our country as a whole.

Far too many young people are struggling to find meaningful employment, despite their skills and qualifications. This not only robs them of economic opportunities but also deprives our society of the energy, creativity, and talent that our youth possess. However, amidst these challenges lies a significant opportunity: "the green economy". The transition to a more

sustainable, environmentally friendly economy presents a wealth of opportunities for job creation, particularly for our youth.

This is why Six (6) out of the eleven (11) Mayoral Priorities for the current administration are directed towards economic development and job creation. I wish to highlight “Energy Mix, Sustainable Service Delivery, Job Opportunity and Creation, Smart City, Sustainable Economic Development, and Green Economy”, as some of these Mayoral Priorities, that are relatable to this gathering today. Overall, the City’s Youth Empowerment programme, aims to create and support initiatives that provide youth with skills training, employment opportunities, and entrepreneurial support. In the spirit of fostering yet another Mayoral Priority coined: Active & Engaged Citizenry”, the city is seeking to enter into partnerships with the private sector, the youth of Joburg, including society at large.

Programme Director;

Climate change has a profound impact in young people who are likely to inherit the long-term negative environmental impacts of the actions we take now. To this extent, the City has a council approved Climate Action Plan, which outlines programmes that the City needs to implement, in partnership with society at large, to put measures in place to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

As we stand at the intersection of economic development and environmental stewardship, MMC Sekwaila, it's clear that the future of work lies in sustainable practices and renewable energy. Johannesburg, as a bustling metropolis, is poised to lead the charge in this green revolution, and the opportunities for green jobs are abundant.

Ladies and gentlemen;

According to findings of the C40 Green Jobs Report, a study that was undertaken by our partner C40 Climate Leadership Group, there is approximately 400 000 job opportunities that can be realised in the City, by the year 2030, through the implementation of the City’s Climate Action Plan and leveraging the green economy. This report represents a collaborative effort between our city and the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, a global network of cities committed to addressing climate change and creating sustainable urban environments. It is clear from this report that the green economy has the potential to be a major source of employment and economic development in our city. From renewable energy production to waste management and eco-friendly construction, the green sector offers a diverse array of career paths for our residents and the youth. Whether you're a recent graduate, a seasoned professional, or someone looking to make a career transition, there's a place for you in the green economy. The power of innovation and technology, will have a multiplier effect in achieving sustainability and creating a brighter, greener future for all Johannesburg residents.

So, what are these green jobs, you might ask? These encompass a wide range of industries, including:

- Renewable energy, for example solar energy generation etc. this will offer opportunities for engineers, technicians, and project managers. Youth with a background in engineering, technology, technicians, project management and environmental science can play a crucial role in developing and implementing renewable energy solutions.
- Sustainable transportation: From electric vehicles to public transit systems (such as Rea Vaya), there's a growing demand for skilled workers in the transportation sector, including transport engineers
- Environmental conservation: Protecting our natural resources requires the expertise of conservationists, ecologists, and environmental scientists.
- Green building and construction: Architects, engineers, and construction workers are needed to design and build energy-efficient structures.
- Waste management and recycling: Recycling facilities, composting operations, and waste reduction programs offer employment opportunities for individuals passionate about sustainability, including project managers.
- Agriculture: With the growing global population and the need to feed more people while minimizing environmental impact, there is a need for innovative and sustainable farming practices. Youth interested in agriculture, nutrition, and food systems can explore careers in organic farming, urban agriculture, and food waste reduction.

Seizing these opportunities requires investment and commitment from all stakeholders. As a city, we must invest in education and training programs that equip our youth with the skills they need to thrive in the green economy. The City will also support initiatives that promote entrepreneurship and innovation in sustainable industries. Furthermore, government has an obligation to ensure that these opportunities are accessible to all young people, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds. This means addressing barriers to entry such as lack of access to education, training, and financial resources.

We must not however, fail to realise that as individuals, we can also play a role in driving the transition to a green economy. Whether through supporting local green businesses, advocating for sustainability in our communities, or pursuing careers in green industries ourselves. I wish to call on all Joburgers to claim their part in playing a part in building a more sustainable future for our youth. The green economy offers not only a solution to youth unemployment but also a pathway to a more sustainable and prosperous future for all. By investing in our youth and supporting the growth of green industries, we can create a brighter tomorrow for generations to come. Let us work together to seize the opportunities that the green economy offers.

By transitioning to a greener economy, ladies and gentlemen, we can realise co-benefits in the improvement of air quality, reduction in pollution, and the mitigation of the climate change impacts. In doing so, we're not only creating jobs but also safeguarding the well-being of our communities for generations to come.

I wish to bring to your attention the fact that, as we embark on this journey towards a greener, more sustainable future, we recognize the vital role that our youth play in shaping the trajectory of our city. They are not only the leaders of tomorrow but also the drivers of change today. By investing in renewable energy, energy-efficient infrastructure, and sustainable transportation, we are not only creating green jobs but also building a more inclusive and equitable city. This presents an opportunity for startups, small businesses, and research institutions to develop and commercialize new products and services that will drive economic growth and create jobs in the City.

So some of you might be asking themselves why are we hosting the Joburg Green Jobs Youth Expo. It is platform to:-

- To introduce youth to green career opportunities
- Provide an opportunity for youth to network and interact with companies, professionals and industry leaders in the green space;
- Encourage youth to follow green career paths and entrepreneurship.
- Show the wide range of skills and professions that can be employed in the “green sector”
- Create opportunities for youth to match with the right companies and for companies to match with the right candidates.
- Showcase the endless career opportunities in caring for nature and people.
- Provide a platform for youth to engage with the city’s climate initiatives and the private sector

As I conclude, we need to recognize the energy, creativity, and passion that young people bring to the table and acknowledges their role as key stakeholders in shaping the future of Johannesburg. As the Mayor of Johannesburg, I envision a City where youth are actively involved in green initiatives, from renewable energy projects to sustainable urban planning. I have no doubt in my mind that the proceeding of today will achieve all these objectives.

A special shout-out to all the youth here with us at this expo, thus Expo is about you and your future and we cannot be engaging on issues pertaining the youth, “the future custodians of Joburg”, without you. #notforuswithoutus. I therefore wish to invite the youth to participate in a competition which aims to make visible the range of challenges the youth currently grapple with within the employment landscape. We ask you to share, through various multimedia, written, visual platforms, for your innovative and practical suggestions on how to build a climate resilient green future in our City. Entries to the competition are now online and will be closing on the 23rd of March 2024. Further information can be accessed on the Joburg Green Jobs Youth Expo website.

I also wish to thank the C40 Climate Leadership Group, the British High Commission, under the UK-Pact facilitated by Sustainable Energy Africa, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the University of Johannesburg through its UJ-Peest, Wits University through its global Change Institute, for contributing to the success of this expo.

I also want to extend my gratitude to businesses that are here with their exhibitions offering all possible opportunities that the youth desperately need.

I recognise and thank the officials from the City of Johannesburg that worked tirelessly to make this day a success. I would like to also appreciate the presence and participation of officials from various spheres of government, such as the Gauteng Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment (the GDARDE) and the Departments of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment (the DFFE), not forgetting all other partners and guests.

I wish you a successful Green Jobs Youth Expo!

Thank you.