

OPENING REMARKS BY THE HONOURABLE MAYOR COUNCILLOR SK MNUKWA ON THE COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION HELD AT ELANGENI HOTEL IN DURBAN ON 20-21 MAY 2021.

Speaker of the Council

Members of the Executive Committee

Chief Whip and Whippery

Councillors

Traditional Leaders

Municipal Manager and Senior Managers

Officials present

Union Members present

Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Ndiyanibulisa ngegama le ntuthukho kunye negama leNkosi yethu uYesu Krestu, Amen

Ladies and Gentlemen; it gives me great pleasure to welcome you all here today. We stand here, gathered under the serve pressures of the current COVID-19 pandemic. We have witnessed one of the worst economic strains in the history of our country's democracy.

However this week marked a new dawn for our residents back at home. The Johnson and Johnson vaccine has made its way to the shores of Umzimvubu and people over 60 years and Frontline workers have now got a prominent chance to protect themselves from this deadly virus. I too got vaccinated earlier this week and wish to encourage all government officials and councillors to register on the COVID-19 vaccination application.

Madam Speaker; Although we have made remarkable progress since 1994, the spectre of inequality, poverty and unemployment remains one of the most glaring impediments to South Africa's goal of national unity and social cohesion.

We also dare not forget the terrible past from which we have come, nor should we forget the many sacrifices made by patriots to ensure our democracy and freedom. Our history abounds with selfless patriots who paved the way for a democratic and free South Africa.

This year marks the 150th anniversary of struggle icon and human rights campaigner Charlotte Maxeke. She and other selfless women of her generation fought against oppression at a time when such defiance was met with unrelenting force.

Programme Director, As we are about to start this planning session, I would like us to remind fellow councillors that Local Government is legislated by the following pieces of legislation; Municipal Systems Act, Municipal Structures Act, MFMA and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. All of these are legislated acts and frameworks that guide the operations of the Municipality.

The existence of our government is to deliver quality basic services to all our people and this we should do in a sustainable manner to realise the objectives of our reconstruction and development agenda for a better South Africa.

There are six National KPAs which are as follows:

- Basic Service Delivery
- Institutional Development and Transformation
- Municipal Financial Viability
- Local Economic Development
- Good Governance and Public Participation
- Spatial Development

In this case, our Municipal SDBIP is developed in alignment to these national KPAs, municipal priorities and the strategic objectives.

Madam Speaker, we are gathered here as this Council in accordance to the requirements of the MFMA and Municipal Systems Act, to develop our Service Delivery Budget and Implementation Plan for the next financial year 2021/22.

We gather a few months before our Local Government elections on the 27th October 2021. This will mark one of the most historic local government election years as we are faced with challenges emanating from service delivery issues.

Secondly, there has been a lot of protests, however that is a signal indicating that masisondelelane nabantu kwicomunities zethu, a call for this collective to derive a consistent approach in providing feedback to our communities on

service delivery issues and any challenges encountered as it is very crucial for us to ensure that we avoid such occurrences.

Madam Speaker, we must enhance some of the mechanisms that we have put in place for public participation such as sitting of quarterly meetings, continuous engagements with all stakeholders in our respective wards to outline all the achievements, milestones in terms of service delivery and all other developmental programmes and initiatives.

We must raise our hands in the spirit of Thuma Mina and participate actively in the transformation of our society. It is our shared responsibility to ensure that all our people bask in the shared warmth of the “Send Me” Programme.

Fellow councillors, during the State of the Municipality Address held in ward 12 on the 29th April 2021, all wards were represented where we provided feedback and created a platform for communities to engage with municipality and all sector departments while advising them about service delivery achievements in their respective wards. It was well attended under the COVID-19 circumstances and communities were advised about the state of service delivery implementation in their respective wards.

This is a call for all of us as the leadership of this municipality to plan better towards the enhancement of our communities. We ought to come with projects that will tap into the reduction of poverty and create better living conditions for our people.

Let us work together and complement each other in order to build and shape our municipality for enhanced and sustainable service delivery, as the people through their votes have given us a firm mandate to build the municipality and ours is to hasten service delivery.

Fellow councillors, we are a municipality that is grant dependant with minimal revenue collection, however I am calling upon the Budget & Treasury department to focus on the implementation of our revenue raising measures to highlight a few:

- Disposal of municipal residential and commercial sites at EmaXesibeni in order to target middle class and build malls & private schools to increase revenue;
- In terms of cost containment regulations, the municipality will derive price list ceiling based on market rates and circulars issued out by Treasury;
- As the municipality we continue implementing cost containment regulation that is circular 92 of MFMA which results into savings which can be reprioritized into service related activities.

- While we are having a service provider assisting the municipality in collecting debts and overdue accounts from business sectors at least there has been a little improvement in terms of collecting revenue but we have to do more.
- A service provider has been appointed to assist in terms of data cleansing so as to produce accurate billing statements, this therefore will assist in improving the municipal collection.

Programme director, we have a task to approve our Annual Budget 30 days before the start of the budget year including the above mentioned necessary revenue measures.

The Division of Revenue Grants allocation for this coming financial year **21/22** financial year is as follows:-

• MIG	-	R 48 951 000.00
• Equitable Share	-	R 238 026 000.00
• FMG	-	R 1 720 000.00
• EPWP	-	R 3 413 000.00
• Electrification Grant	-	R 33 000 000.00
• Library Subsidy	-	R 750 000.00
• Small Town Rehabilitation	-	R 29 841 163.00
• Human Settlements Housing Project	-	R 12 000 000.00

TOTAL BUDGET : R 367 701 163.00

Furthermore, the IDP process that we embarked on had informed the development of this SDBIP that departments are to present in this session, therefore our plans should filter in all projects raised by communities in their order of priority.

Programme Director, as this Council we must also ensure that Annual Performance Agreements of the Municipal Manager and section 56 managers for 2020/21 are linked to measurable performance objectives of the SDBIP that we are to adopt in order to ensure proper alignment and accountability.

Let me call upon the department of Local Economic Development to focus on agricultural related matters, as the municipality is strong in agriculture and I hope that when the department is presenting it will clearly outline the detailed plan on how the municipality will achieve this programme.

Madam Speaker, as much as there has been a lot that management has done in terms of implementing the adopted audit turnaround strategy, we were amused by the audit opinion that we have maintained which is a Qualification.

However in a session that we held as extended EXCO and management during the risk workshop that we held sometime last month here in Durban, we agreed that all the unresolved findings raised both by internal and external auditors must be resolved before the end of this financial year.

Portfolio Head for Budget & Treasury, Madam Speaker, MPAC Chair, Chief Whip, myself, and all councillors, we have a responsibility of practising oversight in all our OCAC meetings and all council committees so as to monitor and ensure that the set action issues/timeframes in terms of the developed turnaround strategy are met for us to be able to achieve a better audit opinion in this current financial year.

Lastly, let us all have fruitful engagements and deliberate as much as we can in order to produce plans that will talk to our people's needs, you are all welcome.

I THANK YOU.