

MAYOR'S SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE MAYOR COUNCILLOR GCINIKHAYA MAKDANDA TO THE ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY ON THE 29TH JANUARY 2021

Madam Speaker

Executive Committee Members

Chief Whip and Whippery

Councillors

Traditional Leaders

Municipal Manager and Senior Management

Officials present

Ladies and Gentlemen

Molweni. Good morning. A warm welcome to you all and compliments of the season!

Today, we assemble again as part of our commitment to taking government to the people. Our meeting here today is particularly significant as we draw close to the upcoming 2021 Local Government Elections.

Allow me to welcome you back after the festive season recess, and wish each and every one a blessed and prosperous year ahead. As we embark on this New Year 2021, I hope that you are all geared up and ready to take on the sobering and exciting challenges ahead.

Madam Speaker; Allow me to also express my profound appreciation and thanks to those officials of Umzimvubu Local Municipality that have ensured a successful Festive Season programme that has by large gone down as one of the 'worst' festive seasons that the country has ever endured since the dawn of democracy.

COVID-19 continues to separate us from our loved and the daily death toll rate significantly continues to rise in our beloved country. We're currently on

adjusted lockdown level 3 regulations and we continue to urge residents to please observe all COVID-19 related health protocols.

As we travel together along the path to overcome the coronavirus pandemic, we must never lose sight of the need to act urgently and decisively to end the violence that men perpetrate against women and children.

Gender-based violence and femicide is our country's second pandemic. I therefore urge our local law enforcement agencies to really act with speed and exercise due diligence in handling these cases.

Honourable Speaker; we are cognizant that 2021 is going to be a challenging year given the mandate of our communities and many tasks we have to tackle in this election year. This we know will be an exceptionally busy year for councillors and officials of this Municipality. However, I would like to reassure the residents of Umzimvubu that service delivery will continue unabated.

The message that I would like to emphasize is that 2021 cannot be business as usual but a year of relentless and fervent commitment to not only maintain service delivery levels and development, but by raising the bar higher and higher.

As we speak the community residents of Ngwegweni Village in ward 3 welcomed a new contractor on the 15th January 2020, who is currently on site to maintain the dilapidated access road infrastructure. This is one of many infrastructure related projects that are yet to come.

During another handover programme in KwaBhaca, we handed over a 17 million project for the surfacing of internal streets in ward 18. The multi-year project is on phase 7 and include the following streets: Sophia to Water Treatment Plant, Mjokwana St, Canca St, Sikelem St, Dlephu St, Nkushubane Drive, Sogoni St, Tshalazana St and Hela St.

Umzimvubu also plans to equip all Municipal clusters with basic infrastructure that promote social cohesion and recreational development in the area like it has been done at Phepheni Village. That sports facility is one of many facilities in the Municipality that will come to aid all neighbouring residents of the village.

Ladies and Gentlemen; on a far more different note, the Auditor General (AG) is still on site as we await the final audit outcome for the 2019/20 Financial Year. I urge all departments to please cooperate and produce all required documents on time. This is an institutional effort and it requires all of us to become critical role players.

In that spirit, I trust that all departments are implementing their audit turnaround strategies that were developed in their respective units for implementation in the current financial year.

Fellow Councillors; without wasting any further time, please allow me to proceed with the business of the day.