

**INAGURAL ADDRESS TO THE MOGALAKWENA SPECIAL COUNCIL HELD ON,
WEDNESDAY 17 JUNE 2015 IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS BY MOGALAKWENA
MAYOR, HIS WORSHIP CLLR M.P SEBATJANE**

Madam Speaker, Councillor Andrina Matsemela

The people of Mogalakwena

The Chief Whip

Members of the Executive Committee of the Council

Leaders of all Political Parties

Honourable Councillors

Magoši a rena

Acting Municipal Manager

Senior Managers and all staff of Mogalakwena Municipality

Representatives of the media

Compatriots and guests

Good Afternoon, Avuxheni, Se lotsha, Thobela,

Madam Speaker, It is with great humility, honour and privilege that I express words of gratitude for the confidence displayed by this Council in affording me the opportunity to serve the people of Mogalakwena as the Mayor.

I also thank my political mentor, the African National Congress and the broader congress movement, for the privilege bestowed on me to be among those bequeathed with the opportunity to serve our people in this Council. It is a responsibility, Madame Speaker, which I take serious because the people of Mogalakwena deserve the best from us.

We indeed value every citizen of this municipality and expect that they will continue to play constructive role when we formulate our municipal integrate plans and should hold us accountable as we implement the service delivery and budget implementation programmes of their municipality. We however call upon our people to do so with discipline, respect and care of the existing public and private amenities which are important for the services they need on a daily basis.

Madam Speaker, for me the prospect of working with the collective of men and women in this Council is both humbling and a source of inspiration. I am fully aware that the Council of Mogalakwena municipality is an executive committee system with council committees.

There is no doubt that the work ahead will be challenging, however when I cast my eyes in this chamber and beyond I am comforted that; “Re Ditau tsa seboka re ka se sitwe ke nare e hlotsa”.

Through rational and collaborative efforts, nothing will stop us from further improving the lives of our residents for better. I look forward to robust and existing debates which should at all times be informed by our shared desire to improve material conditions of our people.

Madam Speaker, yesterday June 16, we commemorated the Youth Day. In this month of the youth we remember the generation of 1976, as it is indeed the young people in that epoch who put forth all in their lives for the political liberation we have today.

They were determined that nothing could stop them from attaining political liberation in their lifetime, and in the process many paid the ultimate prize for creating abounding opportunities which the current generation of young people must peruse and defend. Equally we salute the ‘young lions of the 1980’s’ who dared to make the apartheid regime ungovernable, whose slogan was “Freedom or death, victory is certain”.

That generation of young people were inspired by their fore bearers of heroes and heroines; Sekhukhune, Makhado and Ngugunyane, a rare breed of Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu, Charlotte Maxeke, Anton Lembede and their generation, who taught them never to surrender.

Equally we remember a wealth of the brave youth from this municipality some whose lives were cut short as they dedicated their youthful life’s to the service of our people. Their crime was purchase of the liberation struggle.

They roared from the ranks of the broader liberation movement, notably MAYCO whose influence permeated to inspired young people in Mapela, Bakenberg, Matlala, Calsrue, Taueatsoala and the surrounding rural settlements.

The best tribute to them is for this Council to take forward the total development of the current generation of our young people - working together with them.

Madam Speaker, allow me to also extend my appreciation and regards to all councillors who came before us in this municipality for their efforts and commitment in laying a firm base that makes this municipality a great place to live, work and leisure in.

We commit to preserve the good this municipality have and to spare no effort towards resolving existing challenges, working with the people of this municipality, the Waterberg District Municipality and the provincial government, in particular the departments of COGHSTA and Provincial treasury.

Madam Speaker, the oath I have just taken commits me to work with all colleagues in this Council, doing so in pursuit of our collective endeavor to defeat the ravages of unemployment, poverty and inequality. I am confident that we will together, work for the improvement of the lives of our people as we further build a more a caring, responsive and accountable municipality that puts its citizens first.

In accordance with the back to basics resolve in local government, we commit to improve the quality and consistent delivery of basic services and entrench a culture of good governance, sound financial management and building a capable institution. To achieve our set objectives we will have to marshal all stakeholders to forge a pact that should make Mogalakwena Municipality a prospering locality.

Madam Speaker, our main town, Mokopane has comparative advantage in that it is at the confluence of two national roads, the N1 and the N11.

It therefore mean that we do not only cater for our residents, but we are there to serve thousands people passing through our municipality to the rest of the province, our country and the continent . This reality should propel us to take advantage of opportunities brought by these routes to the benefit of our people.

In that regard more focus should also be on development of our competitive local economic growth nodes. To achieve that feat will require that we should continue to work with both the national and provincial spheres of government as well as local business to improve our infrastructure in order to create conducive conditions for investment in our municipality.

Madame Speaker, I believe strongly that the goal of turning the status of this municipality to be the City is attainable. It will not be easy, but it surely can be realized. To achieve that goal depends on how urgent we increase the momentum of stability in the governance and administration of our municipality and the extent to which we raise the level of development of our town and expand our infrastructure to cater for the potential economic growth.

Madam Speaker, It is common cause that this municipality is endowed with unprecedented investment opportunities in mining, tourism and agriculture. We therefore need to increase the capacity of both our basic and bulk infrastructure to meet the all impending investments while enabling us to continue delivering basic services to our people.

Madam Speaker, It is common because that it is in the rural areas of our Municipality, where the majority of those with less economic opportunities reside. Similarly we continue to witness migration to our urban and peri-urban centers by more of our people seeking better opportunities.

Therefore we must ensure that resources made available for those without services are spend expeditiously, and not allow poor spend of conditional grants to the effect that we surrender unspent allocations to the national fiscus.

In addition, we recognize that the following constitute the minimum basis for a functional, well governed and efficiently administered municipality;

- Prevalence of political stability, functional structures, and a healthy political and administrative interface
- Prompt response to service delivery needs of communities,
- A well maintained infrastructure
- Institutional continuity, maintaining clear policies and a set of progressive framework of delegations of authority at all levels
- Sustenance of a high revenue collection rate,
- Ensure sufficient allocation to the maintenance budget, spent our capital budget, while maintaining clean audits throughout the financial years and,
- Regular feedback to the community.

Madam Speaker, this council is a creature of statute, as it was established pursuant to a number of legislations. We exist through the constitution, Municipal Structures Act, Municipal Systems Act, Municipal Finance Management Act, Municipal Property Act, to mention a few.

We commit that this Council and its administration will continue to be guided by the law, its policies and decisions that shall be taken on a continuous basis in accordance with approved delegations of authority.

Madam Speaker, we are meeting just before the end of the 2014/15 financial year, and Mogalakwena Municipality has “traversed rough seas” in the past two years.

One strategist and theoretician, Che Guevara once said “Tell no lies and claim no easy victories”.

We had our share of rough times, and we should all commit to ensure that the recent ugly past never recur, as it had no benefit to our people. Henceforth, we will spend our energies on matters that have to do with service to our people.

Madam Speaker, as it is normally said that “one has to hit the ground running”, I will be meeting with the executive committee in the coming few days to take forward the various council programs as the current financial year draws to a close in the next few days.

We will also meet with leaders of all parties that have seats on the council. We will assess the readiness to start the 2015/2016 financial year. We will work with the management team to do the best for our people. We need to emphasize, Madam Speaker, that our Council employees are very important to the success of this Municipality.

When members of our community access municipal services they do so through council staff, when business require zoning permits, licenses and pay rates and taxes, their first point of contact is the council staff. Indeed the front line of service implementation is council staff.

We commit to support our staff as they implement programmes and decisions of council and we will also expect efficient and cost effective discharge of their service. We call upon members of the business community and civil society to continue partnering with council for the betterment of our municipality.

We continue to recognize that our traditional leaders are pivotal in providing partnerships with our rural communities in order to improve service delivery.

Madam Speaker, it is the Council that has the ultimate responsibility for its legislative and governance affairs. We must execute our mandate knowing fully well that we are the representatives of our people, not their masters. We should engage and enjoy our debates. Equally we must confront our challenges head-on, with urgency at all times.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I am glad to join Team Mogalakwena Municipality and look forward to making meaningful contribution.

Thank you!