ADDRESS BY WORSHIP - THE MAYOR OF THULAMELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY HER WORSHIP CLLR MAHOSI N.G DURING STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION OF THE MUNICIPALITY.

DATE : 28- 30 NOVEMBER 2012

VENUE : TSHIPISE AVENTURA

Speaker of Council

Chief whip of council

EXCO Members and section 79 chairpersons.

Chairperson of the house of traditional leaders

Municipal Manager

Members of Senior Management team

Members of staff here present

And all protocol observed

It is an honour for me to officially unveil this strategic planning session we are undertaking today, which will keep us fully informed about the productive and workable plan we are about to collectively craft, for our promising Municipality.

I`ve realized that it is not every municipality that is as fortunate as we are. Hence for us to deliver on the priorities that we will be debating about is no longer a myth but a tested experiment with suitable apparatus.

POLICY FRAMEWORK

How we go about the business of the Municipality is informed by the following policy pronouncement:

The ANC National Executive Committee Annual January 8th statement has declared 2012 as the year of unity in diversity and also marked the ANC Centenary, which is the moment to pause and ponder about the future of South Africa and of the ANC over the next one hundred years.

During this year, 2012, our nation is urged to renew our determination to build a South Africa founded on the principles of the Freedom Charter and our democratic Constitution.

This is also the era to bring about new energy and new ideas into the kind of society we want to build over the next few decades.

The state of the nation address by President Jacob Zuma gave further elaborations in declaring 2012 and beyond as the era to realize massive infrastructure development thereby creating jobs nationwide.

Premier Cassel Mathale gave local flavour to the two National policy pronouncements, through his State of the Province Address.

Outcome 9 (local Government delivery agreement) is a key focus of our work between now and 2014 and has also indentified progressive series of initiatives to turn the tide in Local Government towards 2014. The above ideology suggests that we need to address 7 critical issues in order to achieve the overarching goal or vision of a responsive, accountable, effective and efficient local government system:

- The first one is to develop a more rigorous, data driven and detailed segmentation of municipalities that better reflect the varied and capacities and contexts within municipalities and lays the basis for a differentiated approach to municipal financing, planning and support.
- Ensure improved access to essential services eg. electricity projects.
- Initiate ward-based programmes to sustain livelihoods eg. “Kha ri shumisane”
- Contribute to the achievement of sustainable human settlements and quality neighbourhoods.
- Strengthen participatory governance.

- Strengthen the administrative and financial capability of our municipalities.
- Address coordination problems and strengthen cross-departmental initiatives.

These policy pronouncement and others which may be made during the course of the year are crucial to the business of the Municipality and how we go about it.

We therefore need to internalize this policy provision in the manner that will find concrete expression in our day to day work.

This strategic planning session we are embarking on today serves as an appropriate platform to align our plans and programmes to these pronouncements.

We are gathered here today to give a further resonance to this year's mandate and to gratefully applaud Thulamela management team for the hard work invested in our programs, our IDP and broader infrastructure expansion as the key pillars that must be used to improve the living conditions of our communities.

President Jacob Zuma's declaration of a year should also necessitate us as the municipality to act as a catalyst to link our plans with the challenges of poverty, unemployment and to speed up service delivery priorities.

Our vision should be that of profound transformation of society to ensure that the economy creates jobs, decent work and sustainable livelihoods.

To speed up service delivery, one of our turnaround strategies should be a strategy of intervention geared towards ensuring that we meet the basic needs of our people, build a clean, responsive and accountable government, improve functionality and professionalism, and strengthen partnership between the municipality and community and to improve support and oversight.

VISION 2030

Thulamela Municipality marks the major Economic Hub of Vhembe District.

Our primary tasks remain that of aligning our strategies with our vision 2030. It is our vision that seeks to propel growth and development of Thulamela Municipality to new heights.

Our neighbourhood projects which are geographically strategized and progressively co-ordinated, forms part one in the metamorphoses of Thulamela Municipality, and also serve as the anticipated reflection of a city by 2030.

BUILDING ORGANS OF PEOPLE `S POWER

Municipalities were envisioned as sites where our commitment to participatory Governance would achieve correct meaning and content.

They were envisioned as a point of contact and coalface of service delivery. The mandate of local government is therefore people driven and people centered.

Our IDP should give a reflection of caring and responsive identity to top community priorities and developmental needs. Our municipality should not lead and deliver from planet Jupiter, but should govern together with communities in planet earth thereby sticking to the government `s conviction that the people shall govern.

The budget and IDP requires collective leadership based on an effective and a strong ward committee model that will serve as a link between government and communities.

This model should seek to deepen and strengthen democracy and enhance community participation, it also seeks to close gaps that exist between government and communities to bring government closer to the people and to hold government accountable.

Communities should never feel alienated and discontent from decision making process and feel disempowered in influencing the affairs of the municipality.

SOUND GOVERNANCE

As a Municipality we should build sound foundation in respect of compliance and governance. There is a need to establish a fully fleshed functional system with sound

internal audit assurance reports, dealing with compliance, risk, governance and value for money audit that can withstand any legal scrutiny. The opinions given in our audit reports reveal that there is still a lot to be improved on. We however we still believe and strive for clean audit as an obligation to realize in 2014.

As part of the auditor general operation clean audit and turn around strategy, we should tirelessly work towards attaining clean audit. That should be everybody `s business.

REVENUE ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY

The next five years of provision of quality service should be accompanied by the collective will of our communities to pay for their service.

A dream of better life will remain a dream as long as our people do not pay for their services. Our developmental agenda will remain stagnated by the unwillingness and failure of our people to contribute to the national discourse of nation building. It is our responsibility to change their mindset.

The initiative incepted for September and November 2012 respectively of 50% discount to our rate payers serves as a major strategic avenue to enhance our revenue collection, however improvements on readjustment of revenue enhancements strategy still have to be reviewed periodically. Ward councillors also serve as the most reliable human resource to link our municipality with constituencies for efficient and effective revenue collection. We need to have the revenue enhancement strategy that is enforceable. The credit control and debt collection policy should be constantly reviewed in line with the council policy on indigents.

OVERSIGHT ROLE

As municipal council we have an important oversight and policy setting role and a wide range of responsibilities that include community leadership, representing citizens and making decisions about provision of services for the betterment of our communities.

Once the approval of the IDP, Budget and service delivery plans has been accomplished, as the municipal council we should exercise important oversight

responsibilities by monitoring and evaluating outcomes. We need to be accountable to communities and avoid situations where communities embark on unnecessary protests.

TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP

Traditional leadership territories should continue to be centres of rural development as they serve as our integral entities to our understanding of creating an interactive government that the president has referred to in our 2011 state of nation address.

Our traditional leaders should play a vital part of fighting poverty, tribal related conflicts and the promotion of harmony within our communities.

Our municipality should intensify its ties through our existing programs with Tribal councils and help in ensuring that tribe related disputes are amicably resolved so that we can collectively address the issues of service delivery in an intensified voice.

SPEEDING UP SERVICE DELIVERY

To speed up service delivery, one of our turnaround strategies should be a strategy intervention measure geared towards ensuring that we meet the basic needs of our people, build clean, responsive and accountable government, improve functionality and professionalism, and strengthen partnership between the municipality and community and to improve support and oversight.

JOB CREATION

Unemployment rate paints a bleak picture of a society riddled by poverty, malnutrition and crime. At worst it erodes the dignity of our people.

Declaration of 2011 combined with declaration of 2012 call upon us to develop strategies and plans that are responsive to the dire needs of our massive jobless poor people.

Our procurement policies should benefit local SMMEs, people with disabilities, women and young people. Our local emerging contractors should also benefit from our infrastructure project.

Through our LED strategy we should continue to empower community based cooperatives aimed at alleviating poverty and underdevelopment in rural communities.

HOUSING AND ELECTRICITY

As part of intervention to fast track electrification backlog we have secured a loan of 90 million from DBSA to fund electricity projects, it is however important to continue to utilize the loan as part of our strategy to ensure continuity, while awaiting for our proposal to own our license as part of increased rural development and enhancement of revenue collection.

Housing is the basic need and in partnership with COGHSTA we should put it at the top of our agenda to ensure housing security and comfort.

Priority should however be people with disabilities, elderly people and women. Councillors should also track progress to avoid media attraction to other unforeseen circumstances in our communities.

ROADS AND STORM WATER MANAGEMENT

Roads infrastructure supports both domestic and regional needs and it is an effective catalyst for spatial development and the development of business and residential areas.

Roads infrastructure facilitates mobility of goods and people to markets and public services such as emergency and police services.

Building and maintenance of roads should therefore remain our key objective.

Extreme weather conditions associated with climate change necessitates the need to mitigate incidence of flood by increasing our infrastructure investment in storm water management system.

Projected mobility, settlement patterns, key economic nodes and spatial development should be taken into account when we come up with infrastructure plans. We need a well functioning routine preventative maintenance programme to ensure regular

maintenance of roads and storm water infrastructure as a way of ensuring that sustainability is maintained.

WATER

Water provision remains the basic need; our communities have got the rights to access clean drinking water every day. While we understand the complexity and the magnitude of water challenges that we are facing, innovative and smart partnership with our district counterparts must be forged to come up with measures which make water not to become a luxury to our communities while helplessly waiting for the long term solution for our municipality.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Thulamela is at the centre of tourism attraction. Our five year plan should include development of improved tourism infrastructure which is aligned to our vision 2030. Through EPWP we can create a clean and healthy environment and vision orientated recreational facilities. We believe that this session is the relevant forum to deliberate on the recruitment of permanent staff to render essential services to our beautiful town.

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

In order to reduce the high vacancy rate and to ensure an improved and sustained service delivery, the municipality must adopt a proactive approach towards our retention strategy. Our retention strategy should be aligned to our constant revision of the Organogram. Our recruitment policy should focus in employing competent employees with proven and consistent employment track record and relevant skills, and relevant qualifications.

CONCLUSION

We expect a lot from this strategic planning exercise. It can be one of those sessions where money, time, energy expanded can bear enjoyable fruits by Thulamela community.

Our planning here should naturally speak to our core business as elaborated in our strategic and annual performance.

Most of our planning tools we need for implementation are at our disposal, when wisely harnessed remarkable changes can prevail and when tools are not available, we shouldn't fold our arms, we must improvise.

Let us also bear in mind that the better lives of people rely on this local government team, which should also stand tall and be proud of providing sound informed leadership.

Let me conclude by wishing this forum wisdom to deliberate extensively, because people out there are waiting for the impact of our planning which should contribute in the development of our civil society. We are therefore expected to accelerate our pace, work harder and smarter in order to realize our targets.

To achieve all our dreams (including vision 2030)

- It should be business unusual. Our plans shouldn't be confined to sealed boxes in our different departments.
- Let go beyond the standardized norms and think outside the boxes.
- Each department should therefore explore the unexpected and make it possible to succeed even when conditions seem to be unfavourable.
- We have the potential to demonstrate to the country and the world, that rural man and women can be innovative and transform rural villages into a city.

But the point of departure should be the well-laid foundation of collective leadership, trust, staying focused and mutual respect.

I`m wishing you a successful and fruitful strategic planning.

I Thank You.