

**Acceptance speech by the Executive Mayor of the Capricorn District Municipality, Cllr M Teffo on the occasion of the Council inauguration, Jack Botes Hall, Polokwane**

26 November 2021

Let me begin by acknowledging and indeed applaud the people of Capricorn District for rising to the occasion on the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021, to exercise their democratic right and elect their representatives during the 2021 local government elections.

It is because of their voice and choice that we are gathered here today as their elected representatives and in whose name we continue carry on with the struggle to “build better communities together”. We therefore thank them once again for re-affirming their confidence and belief in the African National Congress as their only hope out of poverty.

I therefore take this opportunity to congratulate Mayors, Speakers, Chiefwhips of our Local Municipalities and all other elected Councillors in our local municipalities and also welcome those that will serve here in this Council of the Capricorn District.

I also wish to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr Speaker Cllr Maseka Pheedi for your election as the Speaker, and thus the leader of this Council. I also wish to extend the convey my congratulations to Cllr Chuene Malebana for your election as the Chief Whip; and I have got no doubt that under your whippery, guidance and stewardship we shall scale the high walls in holding the Council together as a convergence point of the interests of all represented parties.

Mr Speaker, my re-election as the Executive Mayor of this District Municipality has humbled me once again, and I thank the leadership of the African National Congress for the continued confidence shown in me. I am determined that all of us elected here will work tirelessly, day and night, to live up to this vote of confidence shown in us by the citizens by doing justice to their hopes, dreams and aspirations.

The message and impression I got from communities during our interactions with them is that the Capricorn District remains on course to make positive impact in their lives. All they need from us is to triple our efforts and expand services to more and more of our residents for sustainable socio-economic development.

But for that to happen, this Council needs to enter a new chapter in a gallant effort to move closer to freeing many of our people from the morass of poverty - a chapter to unite and pull in one direction. And I am pleased that this council term commences at a time when –

- 87% of the district population has got access to piped water
- When 65 % of our households has decent sanitation;
- When 96% of our households is connected to the grid;

As we are happy with these milestone, we are however aware of the overwhelming demand for water by the remaining 13% of the population; we are also aware of the current remaining 35% of households without adequate sanitation, and the rural road network backlog on district roads that lies untarred and unsafe to use. However, as we commence with this council mandate term, our focus is to clear these backlogs and make Capricorn a liveable, model region for Limpopo.

It is those milestones that should inspire all councillors to work even harder to achieve 100% access to basic services. And as we enter into the third decade of local government, let us seek to translate the firm foundation laid in the past 20 years of local government into a meaningful and lasting improvement in the living conditions for all our people, especially the rural poor of our district.

In the same breath, let me take this opportunity to pay tribute to all outgoing councillors who served in the district Council as well as in our local municipalities, for their active leadership and dedication to the course of a better life for all.

Mr Speaker, during our election campaign with our communities and other stakeholders, we acknowledged to them and accepted the reality that

even with all these positive developments that we achieved, a lot still need to be done to make our municipalities work better in delivering services to all, particularly taking into account that thousands of our people complain about water and jobs on a daily basis.

In accepting this big responsibility of making local government a powerful instrument of progressive change, we pledge to continue working together with our communities and all sector departments, businesses and our *magoshi* to -

- Address water supply interruptions and increase access to more of our people
- Provide free basic services to the indigent households
- Build adequate, better equipped fire stations and disaster management centres;
- Create enabling environment for local economic growth and job creation
- Accelerate empowerment of special focus groups such youth, women, children, and people with disability and fight GBV
- Strengthen our integrity systems to fight corruption
- Improve financial management and retain clean audit

Mr Speaker, in order to deliver on these mandates, there is a need to instil a new culture of working and sense of urgency among our employees. All critical vacant positions will be filled as a matter of top priority, including the position of Municipal Manager.

This term will be more challenging as residents have sent us a clear message that they have now run out of patience for us to deliver; but with determination, the political will and the relentless drive to succeed, we can indeed build better communities for them. Our greatest challenge is to ensure that every citizen is proud to a resident of this District.

In putting systems in place to enable this new Council to carry out its executive mandate, I am therefore pleased to announce a team of the following councillors as members of the Mayoral Committee:

## **Full time:**

Infrastructure Services - Cllr Maite Mohale

Finance - Cllr Maria Ramokolo

Corporate Services – Cllr Sammy Selamolela

Community Services – Cllr Elizabeth Rahlana

Planning and Environmental Management – Cllr Matome Masoga

## **Part-time**

Strategic Executive Management Services – Cllr Solly Mahlatji

Local Economic Development – Cllr Caroline Mamabolo

Sports Art and Culture – Cllr Makgahlela Makhura

This team understands the magnitude of responsibility that lies ahead and I have no doubt that they are equal to the task of ensuring that indeed we build better communities in this region. We still reserve our commitment to work with all the opposition parties, NGO's, business; labour movement; traditional leaders and other social partners to deliver services and improve the lives of our people.

This team has committed to never abandon the plight of our people, and therefore redouble efforts to meet the expectations of our people in line with our manifesto and all our election commitments.

Mr Speaker, one pertinent question this Council must deal with is how to do things differently to ensure faster change in our communities knowing fully well that history will judge us harshly if we do not take stern action against the slow pace of delivery, laziness and lack of oversight by councillors.

Unity of purpose and intent should therefore allow us to embrace our collective wisdom in navigating the district and local municipalities through stormy waters for the benefit of the poor. We must all be crusaders of good governance and champions of delivery.

Let us accept full and collective responsibility of making this District local government the centre of gravity in service delivery.

*Moshomo ao tshabe diatla*

Rea leboga