" It was the best of times ...."

END OF THE YEAR MESSAGE BY : THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF WATERBERG DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

CLR PINKY S. KEKANA

" It was the best of times, it was the worst of times ....."

This is the opening sentence of A Tale of Two Cities, a classic written by Charles Dickens, referring to the time of the French Revolution.

These prosaic words of wisdom crossed my mind when I looked back at yet another historic year in the post apartheid South Africa.

Yes, indeed, "it was the best of times" as the overwhelming majority of our people made their voice heard on 1 March 2006 when they gave a mandate to the ruling African National Congress (ANC) to continue with its revolutionary efforts of bettering the lives of our people by reversing the frontiers of poverty.

During those elections, we saw women occupying over 50% of positions of authority at local government level as executive mayors, mayors, speakers of various councils and members of mayoral communities.

" It is the best of times " as our country was given a permanent seat in the United Nations' Security Council representing the African block.

It is the best of times when the country has agreed to be subjected to an African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) process in

which all sectors of the South African society have to evaluate the extent to which we have democratised our political landscape and transformed our economy by redressing the economic imbalances arising from the legacy of apartheid colonialism.

It is the worst of times as we bid farewell to Kofi Anan, the outgoing Secretary - General of the United Nations.

It is the best time as we celebrate the R26 billion investment that Eskom has made in the construction of the Matimba 2 power station - thus confirming Waterberg District as the petrochemical kingpin of South Africa.

It is the best times as Kumba Resources increases their mining input and the discovery of the platinum reserves in the province - especially in the Sekhukhune District - reaffirms Limpopo as God's geological gift to humankind.

It was the best of times as the Waterberg District hosted the official provincial celebrations of the International Day of People Living with Disabilities in Thabazimbi, on 2 December 2006.

It was the best of times as the district hosted the Wild Life Expo, which amplifies the local economy of Mabatlane.

It was the best of times as the district hosted the provincial launch for the Youth Advisory Centre Programme. Umsombovu Youth Fund approved the application that was submitted by the Waterberg District Municipality to establish Youth Advisory Centres within our six local municipalities.

It was the worst of times when there were incidents of racism in Thabazimbi - the demon which we have to remove in toto from our society.

It was the best of times when three fire fighting heavy vehicles valued at R2, 5 million were handed over to Bela-Bela, Lephalale and Modimolle.

It is the year in which the remains of that revolutionary son of soil, Moses Mabida were reburied in our country after having been exhumed from Mozambique - were this stalwart was exiled to.

It was the worst of times as the lives of a number of distinguished comrades were untimely cut short by the evil handedness of man's greed or the scourge of diseases.

We therefore, pay homage to those gallant heroes and sheroes of our struggle such as comrade Lekalakala, councillor elect of Mogalakwena Local Municipality, Clr Mothapo from Ga- Mothapo and Tracey Malatjie, Municipal Manager of Capricorn District Municipality and also a national executive committee member of the ANC Youth League.

Borrowing from traditional wisdom we hear our ancestral voice commanding " Ngwaga o sa nthateng, kgabaganya " (literally translated as " the year that doesn't love me, pass on") Echoing this missive is that English bard, William Shakespeare, when he asserts: " Now is the winter of our discontentment...."

Yes, indeed, the end of our suffering and trepidation is nigh as we have entered what President Thabo Mbeki has aptly called "an age of hope".

As we celebrate the festive season let us be mindful of the parameters within which we should enjoy ourselves and be merry. At our homefront, let us avoid exhibiting our state of drunkenness in front of the very same children we will be expecting to respect us the very same morning.

This means: No staggered movements, no zigzags and no "one step forward, two steps backwards " in our streets or in public view especially next to your own children or siblings. No jaywalking. No drinking and walking. Finally, no drinking and driving.

ENJOY YOUR FESTIVE ! LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL.