

**CITIZENS REPORT BY HIS WORSHIP CLLR SIPHO
MHLANGA ACTING THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF
WATERBERG DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY DURING
THE BATHO PELE EVENT HELD ON THE 17TH
OCTOBER 2013 AT THUSANG SPORT GROUND AT
11H00 IN MOOKGOPHONG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

Programme Director,

Acting Mayors

Speakers and Chief Whips in the district,

MMCs and Exco members,

Councillors,

Magoshi a rena led by Kgoshigadi Taueatsoala,

Municipal Managers,

Traditional Healers Practitioners,

Senior Municipal and Government Officials,

Representatives of Community Based Organisations,

Business associations present,

Leadership of the District Youth Council,

Leadership of the district Moral Regeneration Movement,

Leadership of the Disability Council,

Members of the Media

Community members,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen.

Thobela, Avuxeni, Selochile, Aaa!

We are gathered here today to reflect on our achievements, challenges for the past year but also to celebrate our nineteen years of democracy. On behalf of the people of Waterberg, we also take this opportunity to thank them for giving us support and challenging us on service delivery issues. To the ANC led government Batho Pele, which means people first has been the guiding principle of our glorious movement.

Programme Director, the 20th anniversary on 27 April 2014 will end the second decade of our freedom and democracy. It will give the 'born frees' – born in 1994, 1995, and before April 27, 1996 – an opportunity to vote in their first ever election.

South Africans will get an opportunity to recall the momentous event of 27 April 1994 when our icon, Tata Nelson Mandela became the first democratically elected President of a free, non-racial and non-sexist nation led by our glorious movement, the African National Congress.

The anniversary will give South Africans, from every sector of society, an opportunity to reflect on the progress we have made and the challenges we have come across in the past 20 years. What the ANC led government has achieved is an envy to most of the African countries who got their freedom before us.

Ladies and gentlemen, as we celebrate our 20th Anniversary of liberation, we also have to introduce new strategies in line with the National Development Plan (NDP) to further better the lives of our people by providing them with quality and affordable services.

The NDP is a Policy blue print for eliminating poverty and reducing inequality in South Africa by 2030.

Among other things, it identifies the key constraints to faster growth and presents a roadmap to a more inclusive economy that will address the country`s socio-economic imbalances.

Programme Director, you will recall that during the last financial year, Council took a decision to resuscitate the Waterberg Economic Development Agency (WEDA) which will serve as an advisor, stimulator and partner in the regional economic environment.

WEDA will not only serve as an advisor to the district and its local municipalities but work together with municipalities to speed up implementation and service delivery and to ensure that economic decisions are better influenced.

.We totally want to avoid the previous mistakes by tightening the loose ends from the beginning which will culminate into an agency that will focus on:

-  Mobilisation of the council support not only from the Waterberg District Municipality but also the six affected local municipalities within its jurisdiction.
-  Drafting of the Milestone Project Schedule for each of the local municipalities.
-  Increased communication to promote local programme ownership and capturing of multi-ranging stakeholder interests.
-  Identification of an anchor project to build the economic character of the district
-  Communication to ensure increased public participation and local ownership

It is only through the establishment and utilisation of this economic vehicle that the Waterberg District can contribute immensely to the general economy of the district, province and country wide.

We are confident that these will be feasible given the potential of the district in as far as mushrooming of mining activities is concerned in particular around Lephalale, Mogalakwena and Thabazimbi areas.

Ladies and gentlemen, during the 2012/2013 financial year, the Office of the Executive Mayor in conjunction with the Local House of Traditional Leaders under the leadership of Kgoshigadi Taueatsoala, engaged the Department of Agriculture with regard to supply of tractors to areas of Traditional Leaders in an endeavour to resuscitate the “back to the ploughing fields campaign”.

Through these engagements, the Department of Agriculture eventually allocated eight (8) tractors, implements and seeds to the Waterberg

District. The department still promise more tractors to be allocated. We are very much delighted because this programme will encourage our communities to initiate food security projects within their area of jurisdiction.

To this effect, the Waterberg District has in its 2013/14 Budget, allocated a minimal amount of money to the tune of R 200 000 for Agri Park support and R 300 000 for the resuscitation of Lephalale Agricultural Corridor respectively.

With regard to the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), all projects implemented by the district municipality and its locals were registered with the Department of Labour for technical and life skills training to train labourers which are to be employed on learnership programmes before commencement of the works.

It has been observed that during the 2012/2013 financial year, the district and its local municipalities experienced delays in implementing most of their infrastructure projects and challenges experienced ranges from the following:

-  Use of emerging contractors on infrastructure projects proven very challenging, as progress is very slow and some contractors ultimately abandoned sites,
-  Unethical behaviour by certain consultants,

- ✚ Lack of community participation as communities did not readily embrace the projects and some Project Steering committees simply dissolve for no reason,
- ✚ Price escalation on materials which normally meant revision of tendered amounts by certain contractors.
- ✚ Contractors requiring extension of time to avoid penalties on projects, and
- ✚ Scarcity of certain materials in certain areas.

The proposed solutions to deal with these challenges are:

- ✚ It has been observed that the usage of emerging contractors does not yield good results, therefore, where possible, contractors are encouraged to sub-contract some of the work to boost capacity,
- ✚ Experienced consulting services should be sought to ensure the smooth running of projects
- ✚ Forward planning need to be explored to avoid delays in supply chain management processes.

The National Department of Transport is undertaking a process of classification of roads within the district to clearly categorise and indicate which road belong to who and we are hopeful that this process will also culminate in capacitating and providing the district municipality with the necessary resources to maintain and upgrade roads belonging to the district.

The district was able to successful implement with aplomb the following infrastructure roads projects:

- ✚ Completion of the Phase Two street paving in Masakhane (Bela Bela)

- ✚ Completion of Phase Two of Modimolle Ring Road in Phagameng and,

- ✚ Upgrading of streets in Mahwelereng, Mogalakwena.

During the Public Participation programme spearheaded by the office of the Executive Mayor, communities raised a concern regarding the poor conditions of roads particularly in the rural areas of Lephalale and Mogalakwena.

During rainy seasons, teachers and learners are unable to attend school and public transport come to a standstill making it difficult for workers to report to their different work stations.

An intervention by the Provincial Department of Roads and Transport to upgrade roads from gravel to tar in their current financial year is very minimal in that most of their projects are based on resealing/rehabilitation and routine maintenance due to financial constraints.

The District Municipality has also budgeted only R 2, 7 million for the upgrading of streets particularly in Thabazimbi and Lephalale and the amount include the implementation and rolling out of the Road Asset Management System.

Programme Director, in terms of Section 32 of the National Health Act 61 of 2003, municipal health is the core function of the Waterberg District Municipality. The functions entails:

- ✚ Water quality monitoring

- ✚ Food control

- ✚ Health surveillance of premises

- ✚ Surveillance and prevention of communicable diseases, excluding immunization

- ✚ Vector control

 Environmental pollution

 Disposal of the dead

In terms of water quality monitoring, sampling and testing of drinking water is a continuous process. Water samples are taken from all drinking water sampling points covering the whole district.

Rivers and dams where communities get their drinking water, are being identified so as to monitor the quality of water and minimise the chances of outbreak of waterborne diseases. Water is life – it is the most important resource to encourage both economic development within communities.

It is however, worth mentioning that Waterberg District Municipality is not a Water Service Authority. Provision of water is undertaken at local municipalities level.

For the past fifteen years WDM and local municipalities have provided water and met milestones as compared the set standards of provision of basic water to communities. Waterberg consists of 8 main dams, 80 boreholes and 15 wetlands.

It is worth mentioning here that Modimolle and Lephalale Local Municipalities were awarded the Blue Drop Status by the Department of Water Affairs and Environmental Affairs.

The Waterberg District Municipality has also prioritised Disaster Management as one of its core functions.

Disaster Management arrangements are designed to deal with all hazards, however, most attention is given to obvious emergencies like fire and transport accidents, a wide range of hazards could be dealt with using disaster management arrangements and resources.

There are two existing Waterberg District Disaster Management centres in the district established in terms of the national requirements, namely Modimolle and Lephalale.

Given the vastness of areas like Mogalakwena and Lephalale, the WDM envisage the establishment of additional satellite fire stations in the near future to expand our services in these two municipalities in an endeavour to comply with the prescribed response time of seven minutes.

Permanent officials were employed by WDM and deployed to the two district centres. During the financial year under review, almost more than half of our operating budget was directed for the purchasing of state of the art fire fighting equipments in order to equal any fire threat that may arise.

Ladies and gentlemen, as far as Community safety Services are concerned, programmes for the previous years have gained momentum. These programmes range from crime prevention awareness campaigns, community safety forums and providing diversionary options to potential perpetrators of crime.

The provision of diversionary options manifest itself in the form of various sporting activities arranged in partnership with the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture and those are amongst others, Indigenous games, golden oldies games, women in sport, farm workers sport etc.

It is worth noting that the sustainability of Community Safety Forums and Community Policing Forums remains a challenge.

Revised crime prevention strategies and workshops at the district level have resulted in some local municipalities identifying projects aimed at eradicating crime and these include the erection of high mast lights in rural villages of Mogalakwena and Lephalale and the installation of CCTV Cameras in Modimolle.

Numbering of houses and awareness campaigns are also some of the strategies explored to root out crime. The WDM in partnership with South African Police Services (SAPS) has embarked on a massive crime prevention awareness campaign called ***“Operation Pimpa”*** in July last

The infection rate for HIV and AIDS in the district continues to be a nightmare which aggravated by the threat of TB epidemic that has surfaced, especially Multi Drug Resistant (MDR).

The Waterberg District tops the list when compared to other districts in the province with regard to HIV/AIDS infections. Thabazimbi is number one at 45% followed by Mogalakwena and Lephalale at 26 and 25% respectively.

It is perceived that the causes of this epidemic is mainly attributed by high level of unemployment, increased mining industries and drug abuse.

As an intervention measure, the Waterberg District has implemented the following programmes:

-  Awareness campaign on HIV and AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases held in Marapong Lephalale on the 25th May 2013.
-  Launching of the Voluntary Testing and Counselling programme in conjunction with the Department of Health in the District.
-  Two days workshop for People living with HIV and AIDS held in Mokopane on the 16-17 May 2013.

The Waterberg District has successfully established and launched the District AIDS Council which will deal specifically with AIDS issues. The new council was established on the 25th January 2013 and attended an induction workshop on the 19-20th March 2013.

The Council already had its inaugural meeting and is in the process of developing their Plan of Action that will direct their day to day operations.

The District Health Council has been established as well and went through a workshop on the 18-19 April 2013, outlining their roles and responsibilities. We hope these structures will contribute meaningfully in minimising the spread of this pandemic.

Programme Director, it should also be noted that the Waterberg District Municipality received the second consecutive Clean Audit Opinion during the financial year 2011/12. We are the only municipality in the Limpopo Province to achieve the clean audit followed by Mogalakwena local Municipality which is the only municipality to achieve an Unqualified Audit opinion. .

The Waterberg District Municipality through the Office of the Municipal Manager, provides structured support to all local municipalities under its jurisdiction as required by the Local Government Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998, with a view to assisting local municipalities in performing their powers and functions. Support rendered include administration, human resources, IT systems, town planning, Integrated Development Plans and Performance Management Systems.

It is worth noting that WDM also shares its Audit Committee with Bela Bela and Modimolle Local Municipalities.

For us to succeed to better the lives of our people it is paramount to ensure maximum stability of the local government system.

We remain committed to work with our local municipalities to stabilise their environment. Office of the Executive Mayor, through the Special Project Unit, seeks to ensure that all vulnerable groups such as women, youth, people with disabilities and children are empowered.

WDM including all its local municipalities should therefore ensure that through their preferential procurement such groups benefit from the procurement processes of these institutions.

In capacitating these groups of people, we engaged in a year long programme and hosted a number of activities, these include amongst others:

- ✚ Women in Sport hosted on the 29 August 2012
- ✚ Heritage Day Celebrations held in Makapans Valley in October 2012
- ✚ Launching of the District Elderly Persons Forum on the 9 November 2012 at Mogalakwena
- ✚ District Disability Day Celebration held on the 28 November 2012
- ✚ 16 days of Activism against the abuse of Women and Children on the 7 December 2012 in Mookgophong.
- ✚ Matric Awards Ceremony held on the 25 January 2013 in Bela Bela
- ✚ Youth Economic Summit 28 February 2013
- ✚ Moral regeneration Event on the 13 April 2013
- ✚ Children`s Day Celebration on the 15 March 2013
- ✚ Executive Mayoral Marathon held on the 11 May 2013.
- ✚ Celebrated 2013 Nelson Mandela Day at H.F.Oordendaal Hospital in Modimolle by painting and donating 12 computers and two printers for effective operation of the hospital.

The Office of the Executive Mayor has also awarded bursaries to five (5) learners within the district of which one is a blind person, to further their studies with tertiary institutions of their choice. We assisted one student from Modimolle to attend her studies in Cuba practising medicine.

These are just but few of the achievements made. However, there is still much to be done on service delivery and we hope to start the new financial year with more energy to complete the tasks at hand.

In conclusion, though it was very tough and hectic in the past financial year, it needs to be noted that there has been relatively a smooth management of the process.

The desire to serve our communities has prevailed, as has common sense. Our councillors and officials remained true in serving the institution and our communities. It was for this reason that processes ran relatively smooth at the Waterberg District Municipality and that's the reason why we have been able to record the achievements of the past financial year.

Today we pay tribute to the dedication and commitment of all and express our grateful thanks for all their hard work.

President Jacob Zuma concluded his State of the Nation Address by saying "We should continue to have one primary goal – to make our country a truly great and prosperous nation". Let us register to vote in the 2014 elections and vote correctly.

Let's also make our district a truly great and prosperous nation.

TOGETHER WE CAN DO MORE!!!

KE A LEBOGA.