

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY CLLR LEAH MABUZA ON THE OCCASSION OF HER ELECTION AS THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF EMALAHLENI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

27 June 2023

Following the resignation of former Executive Mayor of Emalahleni Local Municipality Cllr Conny Nkalitshana, on the 21st June 2023, Council replaced her with the newly elected Executive Mayor Cllr. Leah M.M. Mabuza.

In her acceptance speech, The Executive Mayor Cllr Leah Mabuza said"

This being the Youth Month, it will be amiss of me if I do not recognize representatives of young people in all Sectors of the Society, because the youth of any nation is the future.

All our Senior Citizens, people with disabilities I wish to assure you that your special needs are a priority to us.

Honorable Speaker, allow me to draw wisdom from one of the greatest Revolutionary of Mother Africa, the late President of Bakina Faso Thomas Sankara,

"Transforming the lives of our people is not a public speaking tournament but efforts to improve concrete material conditions of our communities"

These words of wisdom propel the current administration to take bold and decisive actions to change the concrete material conditions of our residents by closing ranks to fight the stubborn triple challenges of structural poverty, unemployment and socio-economic inequalities.

Esteemed Councilors, I rise with the great sense of humility to take a bow for the distinguished honour and gesture of trust bestowed in me to lead together with you this titanic institution not in terms of its size but in terms of its strategic importance to the South African Economy.

I step forward fully conscious that I am here to serve Emalahleni Community at the behest of the ANC to advance boldly and decisively the legislative obligations and the electoral mandate given to the ruling party, and that mandate is to build better communities together. "She said"

This electoral mandate cuts across party lines because there is no political party represented in the council which does not want to see a better life and sustainable livelihood of our communities.

Therefore, let's work together to find common grounds to accelerate the pace of improving service delivery and local inclusive economic growth and development as the only option we have at our collective disposal.

I do wish to take this opportunity to heartily thank on behalf of the leadership collective my predecessor whom we share the same political DNA of the ruling party for contribution in taking forward our collective historic mission of building a better life for all under very difficult socio-economic conditions and challenges.

Ours is to put building blocks on some of your service delivery visionary initiatives, we know there are no easy solutions for some of the challenges facing municipalities across the country, that as it may, thank you Cde Conny Nkalitshana for doing your best under very difficult binding internal and external constraints, WE SALUTE YOU.

Let me remind this august Special Council Sitting that Emalahleni Local Municipality is the Energy Heartbeat of Southern Africa, holding comparative advantage in mining and utilities, hosting five (5) coal fired power stations.

This municipality is the Second largest economy in the province with a contribution of 46,2% to the Nkangala District Economy.



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Amongst the documents I will be looking for in the hand-over package, is the Municipal Trade and Investment Promotion Strategy because that is the blueprint to leverage our comparative advantage to attract local and foreign Direct Investment, getting the local economy to grow faster at least by 5% per annum as per our IDP target to benefit the local SMME sector and reduce unemployment rate significantly, especially among young people.

We must focus on strengthening strategic partnerships with the Private Sector, build inhouse capacity with technical Expertise to manage IGR and all strategic stakeholders within and outside the municipal boundaries.

The municipality must be able to gather the right economic intelligence timeously, coordinate development of responsive business plans in order to mobilize resources for high impact catalytic projects.

If we are really serious about changing the structure and local economic landscape to benefit the poor of the poorest we must not only be bold and decisive, but we must also be innovative, think differently and keep up with the pace of national and global economic evolution.

This caution was eloquently articulated by the Minister of Finance, Hon Enoch Godongwane tabling his 2023 budget speech when he underlined that high on the agenda is load shedding which has become more persistent and prolonged impacting negatively on Service Delivery and threatening the survival of many businesses.

We are navigating a very difficult environment wherein households are under pressure from rising costs of living and unemployment has remained stubbornly high.

The President of the Republic of South Africa, His Excellency Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa in his 2023 State of the Nation Address giving all three spheres of Government marching orders when he called on them to focus on those issues that concern South Africans the most namely:

- Load shedding aggravated by lack of capacity in municipalities to meet electricity demand and to supply electricity consistently,
- High unemployment rate
- Poverty and rising cost of living
- Crime and corruption

The president added that there is no easy solution to any of these challenges.

Emalahleni unemployment rate has been hovering around 36,9% using expanded definition for the period 2021 to 2022.

For the same period the youth unemployment rate was at 41% using a strict definition.

This scenario was aggravated by the job losses of around 30 000 (Thirty Thousand) between 2020 and 2021 due to Covid-19related factors.

The question before us is how do we respond to these challenges as a municipality because under such desperate and highly depressed socio-economic conditions it cannot be business as usual, we must work together with our communities to find solutions.

Hon Speaker having taken time to outline the high-level context of the municipal problem statement in respect of its inability to deliver services promptly and consistently, I will before the end of this week outline my short-term priorities within the first 100 days in office to be followed by the details of medium to long term service delivery priorities in the State of the Municipality Address on a date still to be confirmed.

At this point Hon Speaker with the indulgence of this esteemed Special Council sitting I stand before you as I hereby do raise my right hand to re-commit to the pledge of the ANC elected public representatives from the 2021 Local Government Elections TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY OF EMALAHLENI IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THE RELIABILITY AND QUALITY OF BASIC SERVICES.



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I believe that the people must come first as our customers, thus:

- will make sure that the promised level and quality of service is always of the highest standard
- Ensure that I respond swiftly and sympathetically when standards of service fall below the promised standard.
- I pledge to work with the community to improve revenue collection with consistent and reliable supply of basic services.
- I pledge to work with you as a community and all volunteers to keep Emalahleni clean, safer, and healthier
- I pledge to work together with you to root out all forms of corruption and finally
- I pledge to put you as a customer first in my day to day work

I THANK YOU

Cllr. L.M.M Mabuza
Executive Mayor of
Emalahleni Local Municipality



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