

**Acceptance Speech by the newly elected Executive Mayor of
Capricorn District Municipality, Cllr John Mpe during the
Inaugural Council Meeting, Peter Mokaba Stadium VIP Lounge,
Polokwane**

26 August 2016

Madam Speaker, Cllr Nakedi Lekganyane

Our Chief-whip, Calvin Masoga

Her worship, Executive Mayor of Polokwane, CLR Thembi Nkadimeng

Her worship, Mayor of Lepelle-Nkumpi, Cllr Nakedi Sibanda

His worships, Mayor of Blouberg, Ntate Pheedi

Mayor of Molemole, Ntate Edward Paya

The right Reverend Dr Bishop B E Lekganyane of the ZCC

The Honoured Bishop Dr Engenas Lekganyane of the St Engenas ZCC

All religious leaders here present

Beng Mabu, Maaparankwe Bahlomphegi Magoshi a rena

Former Mayors of our district and local municipalities

Fellow Councillors and former Councillors

Leadership of our glorious movement, ANC and its Alliance

Leadership of political parties represented in Council

Provincial head of the IEC

Thank you Acting Municipal Manager and staff present

Representatives of various government departments, Parastatals;

Members and leaders of SAMWU AND IMATU

Members of the Business Community; Members of the academia;

Representatives of Community Based Organizations; NGO's

The Media

Distinguished Guests

FELLOW South Africans

Thobela

I stand here today humbled by the privilege given to me by this Council to lead the people of Capricorn. I am also standing before you grateful for the trust and overwhelming mandate that you the residents have once

more bestowed on my organisation, the African National Congress to continue with the programme designed to achieve a better life for all.

Dring this month of August, I am also mindful and grateful to many sacrifices borne by our ancestors; women of courage and gravity who confronted the most barbaric system of oppression by marching to the Union building to dare the apartheid government from expanding the repressive pass laws to women.

I pay tribute to all women for the role they played in making it possible for us to achieve the very freedom we are enjoying today. In the same vein let me pay tribute to my unsung heroine, my late mother Marumo a Serogole, who despite being a single parent, nurtured and raised a person I am. That while she worked as a domestic worker and grew up in a poverty household, she remains a pillar of strength for me as I develop and being actively involved in the struggle for freedom.

For me, she ranks among great heroines such as Lilian Ngoyi, Charlotte Maxeke, Winnie Mandela, Ray Alexander, Helen Joseph, Priscilla Mokaba, Florence Matomela, and many unsung heroines who throughout the long years of struggle for freedom demonstrated fortitude in confronting white minority rule. Wa thintha bafasi wathinthe mbokotho.....malibongwe.....

Allow me fellow Councillors to appreciate the important role played by our traditional leaders in allowing leading us and creating a conducive environment for free elections in the area. Let also pay tribute to the late chairperson of our District House of Traditional Leaders, Kgoshi Maisha III, for his contribution as a member of this Council. *Re a leboga Meletse. Beng mabo re leboga ka moka. Tau tsa hloka seboka di sitwa ke nare e hlotsa. Mphiri o tee ga o lle.* Working together we can and we will do more.

Madame Speaker, Please allow me, to thank the residents of our district who braved the bad weather, travelled long distances and stand patiently in long queues to cast their vote in this elections. Thank you for making your mark and voting for the parties and ward candidates of your choice.

I also wish to thank and congratulate the Independent Electoral Commission for its sterling work in organising and running the local government elections that are free, fair and credible. We are indeed grateful to the IEC leadership, management and staff for the sterling work in conducting this election.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Madame Speaker, on your election to this high office. Your election is proof of the confidence that this Council has in your abilities to Chair this Council and provide leadership to all its oversight structures. A critical responsibility to ensure good governance and put into practice our basic political principle that says the people shall govern. In the same vein, allow me to congratulate our Chief Whip for his election into this very important responsibility of ensuring order through the multi-party whippy mechanism as well as chairing the Caucus of the majority party in Council.

I also wish to congratulate all our local (Executive) Mayors, Speakers, Chief whips and Councillors on their elections as true representative of our people in all our four municipalities of Polokwane, Molemole, Blouberg and Lepelle-Nkumpi.

Let me also congratulate all political parties for being elected to be part of this Council and our local councils. A special word of appreciation and gratitude to my organisation, The African National Congress for the trust and privilege of deployment. I am looking forward to your guidance and support.

I also wish to extend a hand of friendship and willingness to work together with all opposition parties, for the common course of serving our people. That like the ferocious Sharks and the beautiful Yellow fish, swimming together in the same waters, we are bound to work together. Through robust debates and diverse opinions, we will build a better and prosperous district. After all, we all brought together by the common objective of achieving a better life for all.

To make this point let me quote Edmund Burke when he said: "*Society is indeed a contract. It is a partnership in all science; a partnership in all art;*

a partnership in every virtue, and in all perfection. As the ends of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born”.

Indeed we are here to continue the legacy of Mandela, Change the lives of our people and ensure a prosperous future for our children and the generations to come.

Madam Speaker, during the election campaign, we crisscrossed this district - meeting, interacting, doing door-to-door and getting feedback from our people about service delivery and the conditions they live in. We listened and made commitments to them. We are therefore correct coming out of this highly contested election to proclaim that the people have spoken.

Our people said while today is better than yesterday, tomorrow must be even better than today. While 89% of our communities have access to portable water, over 80% of our households are electrified and only about 30% have proper sanitation, (30%) of households have access to waste removal, a lot still need to be done to change the lives of our people for the better.

Madam Speaker, amongst challenges facing our communities, are a high rate of unemployment, poverty, inequalities, nepotism and corruption. Another pressing issue that has been raised sharply is poor implementation of projects and in some instance lack of project management, monitoring and evaluation.

In committing this district for the next 5 years let quote the words of Che Guevara when he said: *"How easy it is to govern when one follows a system of consulting the will of the people and one holds as the only norm all the actions which contribute to the well-being of the people”.*

In line with assertions and our resolve to work together to advance people's power in every community, we are going to embark on what is called listening campaign *Operation Theeletja*. This will entail visits to our communities, Traditional Authorities with the aim of introducing the newly

elected municipal leadership, listen to the people and take notes. I also wish to pledge that no ward councillor shall spend 3 months without reporting back to the community and take up new mandate. This will be part of the new beginning to improve public participation and accountability.

Madam Speaker, we are committing to ensuring that every community has access to clean and portable water, within our five years in office. This will require new bulk water projects to source water from Nandoni, Glen Alpine and Flag Boshielo dams in order to provide this precious but yet scarce resource. We are urging our Communities to continue using water sparingly. In order to restore dignity to our people, best practices need to be adopted to speed up the rollout of sanitation facilities, particularly in rural communities.

Madam Speaker, in accepting this responsibility to lead I also commit to ensuring that every community enjoys access to electricity in the next five years. All mechanisms aiming at reducing consumption will be implemented. In this regard let me congratulate Eskom for the good work in improving the reliability of supply and good service they are rendering to our people.

Madam Speaker, we remain committed to developing and strengthen the local economy, create jobs and promote job placements, for the youth in general and graduates in particular. In this regard, the performance of every municipality and departments shall, therefore, be measured on basis of these key indicators. The days of tendering for life by our people will have to come to an end. It is our resolve to make sure that the bidding system we have is used to generate capital that must promote entrepreneurship and produce black industrialists.

Therefore, those wishing to do business with our municipalities must demonstrate appetite and take practical steps to own means of production and not buy flashy cars and luxury items.

We are committed to building spatially integrated communities. While we condemn land grabbing or illegal occupation of land, the challenge of

landless black majority needs our urgent attention. The time has come for us to move away from apartheid spatial settlements. This will mean that in the next five years we will build new integrated settlements where the poor and the rich, black and white reside side by side in the same suburbs.

Madam Speaker, our success in delivering quality services to our people depend on the capacity of our internal human and financial resources. It is for this reason that all our municipalities will prioritise training of our staff and Councillors.

As President Nelson Mandela taught us that education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world, I call on all our Mayors and Councillors to prioritise life long study and make it their habit to read. All councillors are expected to have skill development plans to ensure that those without qualifications or formal education study towards some qualification by the end of their term of office. This will be achieved through partnership with local institutions of higher learning, COGHSTA and SALGA.

In this regard let me express appreciation for the good induction programme already adopted by SALGA to prepare our Councillors for their new responsibilities. Working together with our Unions we will also pay serious attention to the filling of critical vacant posts in all departments.

Madam Speaker, without financially viable municipalities our vision of building better communities will not be realised. In this regard, I wish to commit to the fact that while exempting those registered as indigents, our municipalities will prioritise cost recovery and revenue generation activities over the next five years.

Corruption, as defined by Transparency International, is “the abuse of entrusted power for private or personal gain”. It steals from the poor their well-deserved quality service delivery, dignity and opportunities. In this regard, we pledge to intensify the fight against fraud, corruption and all social fabric crimes in our communities.

Madam Speaker, as we move towards the heritage month of September let me quote this African saying that says "Until lions have their own historians, tales of the hunt shall always glorify the hunter" (Igbo, Nigeria).

Fellow residents our district has a rich history, which need to be preserved. In this regard let me pledge our commitment to making sure that during our term of office we will prioritise the renaming of municipalities, streets and other areas of geographical significant after our heroes and heroines. This we will do with the view of preserving our history and achieving social cohesion.

Madam Speaker, Section 80 (3)(a) of the Municipal Structures Act gives powers to the Executive Mayor to appoint a mayoral committee; (b) provide that the Executive Mayor may delegate his powers and duties to the mayoral committee member to act in his absence. In line with the provision, I hereby appoint the following Councillors to serve as Mayoral Committee members.

Full-time

Infrastructure services - Cllr Monicca Mohale

Community Services – Cllr Betty Kgare

Corporate Services – Cllr Elizabeth Kgatla

Finance – Cllr Phineas Boloka

Planning _ Cllr Chuene Malebana

Part-time

Local Economic Development- Cllr Selamolela Sammy

Strategic Executive Management Services - Cllr Jara Masubelele

Sports, Arts and Culture – Cllr Monice Ntsoane

This team will from today hit the ground running working with our municipalities, Traditional Leaders, Sector Departments and other social

partners to identify concrete steps and things that we together need to do to realise high economic growth; reduce poverty and create the much-needed jobs.

In conclusion, allow me fellow Councillors allow me to pay tribute to the former Minister of sport and recreation, Reverend Makhenkesi Stofile. He ran a good race and served our people with distinctions. May his soul rest in peace.

Madam Speaker, I wish to express congratulatory message to Caster Semenya, the great daughter our district, for winning Gold in the recently held Rio Olympics. We thank her for making us proud and for bringing joy to our Country, province and district.

Fellow Councillors, let us be proud to be part of this great district, the district of Peter Mokaba, the District of Sefako Makgatho, the District of Moses Mphahlele, the District Lilian Ngoyi, the District of Charlotte Maxeke, Frans Mohlala, Castro Pilusa, Fistas Mothudi and many unsung heroes and heroines.

The home of great warrior Kings, King Makgoba and King Malebogo.

As our Father Madiba taught us that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it, I am accepting this responsibility with humility and courage. We pledge to serve you without fear or favour and remain the humble servants of the people of this mighty district.

Working together we will reclaim victory against poverty, unemployment and inequalities and build a prosperous district.

I THANK YOU