

Speech by

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Executive Mayor of Tshwane

SoCA 2017: The progress we have made thus far is only just the beginning

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Note to Editor: This is the speech delivered by the Executive Mayor of Tshwane, Solly Msimanga, at his inaugural State of the Capital Address (SOCA). This address was held at Tshwane Events Centre (Pretoria Showgrounds).

Madam Speaker

Your Excellences, Ambassadors and High Commissioners

Leader of Council Business

Chief Whip of Council

Members of the Mayoral Committee

Fellow Councillors

Esteemed Governor of the Reserve Bank

City Manager and Senior Managers present today

Leaders of the Business Community present today

Distinguished Guests

Comrades and Friends

Members of the Mass Media

Our VIPs, the resilient people of Tshwane

It's an immense honour and a privilege to deliver the first State of the Capital Address since the historic turnover of power that brought change to our city.

At my first State of the Capital Address, I stand before you, the people of Tshwane, humbled by your irrepressible spirit, which will stand us in good stead for the task before us.

In preparing for the road ahead it is often important to look back at the sacrifices that have been made and to recognise that there are lessons to be learnt.

Often hard lessons.

Madam Speaker

Honourable Alderwomen, Aldermen and Councillors

On this day exactly 23 years ago, namely on 6 April 1994, the then South African Government and the ANC ultimately announced that the first non-racial election would take place as scheduled, throughout the country. The Independent Electoral Commission then, for purposes of the very first democratic election, confirmed 27 April 1994 as the day that would set South Africa free.

As a young South African constitutional democracy we are celebrating today that determination on 6 April 1994, which set in motion the freedom of South Africa.

We today also pay homage to a struggle hero, Solomon Kalushi Mahlangu, who was born in Pretoria on 10 July in 1956. He was tried from 7 November 1977 to 1 March 1978 for attacks in Gosh Street in June 1977. During his trial, Solomon was brutally beaten, suffered severe brain damage and was unfit to stand trial. However, as a common purpose had been formed, Mahlangu was found guilty of the charges.

His subsequent execution provoked international protest and condemnation of South Africa's internal policy. In fear of crowd reaction at the funeral the police decided to bury Mahlangu in Atteridgeville. On 6 April 1993 he was reinterred in the Mamelodi Cemetery, where a plaque states his last words: "My blood will nourish the tree that

will bear the fruits of freedom. Tell my people that I love them. They must continue the fight.”

It is this fight for our people, with our people, that we continue decades later.

Madam Speaker

When preparing for such an address it was challenging to know where to start but upon reflection I remembered the words of former President Thabo Mbeki which made it clear that “on an occasion such as this, we should, perhaps, start at the beginning.

So, let me begin.”

The 3rd of August 2016 was the culmination of months of arduous work and a long journey to win the support of the people of Tshwane to vote for a change in political leadership.

This was by no means an easy task. In fact, at times it seemed like an impossible task. When Ms Thoko Didiza’s name was belatedly announced as ANC mayoral candidate the streets of Atteridgeville and other places were ablaze.

I immediately thought to myself that if the people of Atteridgeville were rejecting such a senior member of a party they had supported for so long, what would become of the capital if taken over by the Democratic Alliance.

Nevertheless, we persevered and we realised that the people of Tshwane were not responding to the announcement of Ms Didiza as mayoral candidate, but rather revolting against the previous administration’s leadership.

Our people simply wanted change. They wanted change that meant less corruption and they wanted to start seeing our city make progress again.

Change that would deliver better services and offer more employment opportunities for all the people of Tshwane – not just small pockets of the connected elite.

The 3rd of August 2016 came and went and it became clearer and clearer as the vote results came in ward by ward, district by district, that the incumbent party was losing its dominance and that we had a duty to unite as an opposition by putting aside our ideological differences and work together to offer the people of Tshwane, Nelson Mandela Bay and Johannesburg the change they so clearly sought.

A real, meaningful and workable alternative to the rank corruption and self-interest that characterised the former administration.

With the formulation of the government in Tshwane, it was important that we identify the key service delivery challenges that transcended ideologies and united those parties dedicated to improving the lives of the people of our city.

This gave birth to our commitment to transforming the city and ensuring that its apparatus worked to provide our people with a life of value. A life underpinned by freedom, fairness and opportunity.

We identified that the City of Tshwane's finances were not being properly managed to deliver on the basic services that our people need.

Specifically, we agreed that access to affordable and sustainable electricity and water supply was paramount and should be our top priority. These are the basic elements required for our people to live a life of dignity.

This was the same when approaching the issue of provision of decent housing.

All of which had to happen through the prism of fairness and without fear or favour.

Understanding that the provision of basic services is at the apex of our collective mandate we realised that our goals are the same despite our ideological starting points.

This administration is united by our common desire to serve the people of Tshwane and deliver on our mandate for change.

We have had our disagreements as is normal, but I would like to thank our partners for their cooperation and support in bringing about the beginnings of change that our people want to see. We look forward to a robust and fruitful working relationship as we rescue the City of Tshwane from the throes of mismanagement and take it to new heights.

At the first sitting of this very Council, I was elected to lead the city. A daunting task, but one for which I was incredibly energised and which presented me with an opportunity for which I am very grateful.

While on the campaign trail we knew that the situation in the City of Tshwane was bad.

We got a sense of just how bad when we learned that the PEU smart meter contract of almost R1 billion might indeed be unlawful, unaffordable and providing substandard services to our people.

We knew something was amiss with the Mamelodi Power Station, the Dinokeng: Tribe One Festival and the City Hall.

We just didn't know how bad it was.

It was only when we came into power that we realised exactly what we inherited. A challenge second to none.

When faced with challenges that seem insurmountable, it is often easier to fall into complacency.

No.

We did not. We were energised and we had to know who we wanted to be as a city.

We knew we wanted to be a city with improved service infrastructure and maintenance to meet the demands of our people.

It was critical that we increase our collection from all revenue sources to 95% to provide the necessary revenue base upon which to provide better services.

It was vital for us to work towards 24-hour one-stop instant customer care so that our residents are not frustrated by government bureaucracy, but rather that they have a pleasant experience when receiving services and are encouraged to pay their rates and taxes and cooperate with the City of Tshwane in future.

Our desire is to be a responsive government that treats our residents with respect in order to build mutual trust with our residents.

We are working to reach an 80% employee satisfaction rate which will go a long way in ensuring that services are delivered by an enthusiastic and professional staff complement.

We want a city that is safe and boasts clean neighbourhoods and public spaces so that residents and tourists can move freely through the city and we can attract investment opportunities.

We want a city that boasts that 100% of tenders, agreements and Council resolutions are compliant with the law and awarded through due and transparent processes.

Without exception.

We want a city that can provide affordable housing and social amenities closer to places of work.

In instances where that is not possible, that an integrated, citywide public transport system be made available.

Ultimately we want to make it easier for our residents to access opportunities and empower them to make use of those opportunities.

Mindful of the magnitude of the task ahead of us and that time was not on our side to provide better services to our people, we knew we had to begin.

So we began.

Council appointed a man in Moeketsi Mosola to lead the administration through some of the greatest and most precarious challenges the City of Tshwane has faced in this democratic dispensation.

And he hit the ground running and we are seeing some of the rewards of having this conscientious man stabilise the City of Tshwane. We look forward to a fruitful working relationship that has already begun in earnest.

We began to labour on a workable adjustments budget and we will continue by passing a fully funded, balanced budget that supports the IDP.

This IDP has been through comprehensive public participation to ensure that it is aligned with our people's will.

As we reflected and still reflect on the past financial predicaments in which the City finds itself, it is important to heed the lessons the Auditor-General's financial statements offer and work tirelessly to turn our financial situation around.

Not just for the sake of fixing it but for the purpose of making the City work for its people again.

To deliver on the promises we made to our people.

And in this spirit we urge our residents and civil society to diligently engage the IDP and draft budget that last week went out for public comment.

An IDP and draft budget that prioritise the needs of our people, especially the most vulnerable in our society.

An IDP and draft budget that look to correct the skewed priorities of the former administration that threatened to relegate even more of our people to a life of poverty.

In real terms this means we have published an unapologetically pro-poor IDP for public comment, which we are confident will achieve the following:

- 10 150 new metered water connections
- Improved weekly waste removal services
- 6 500 new households with access to sanitation
- 10 400 new electricity connections
- 121 km municipal storm water drainage network provision
- 13 km of tarred road to communities who have never had tarred roads before
- 7 informal settlements to be fully formalised, henceforth known as Project Tirane
- 104 000 new income-earning opportunities to be facilitated by the City

The City of Tshwane is also looking to attract approximately R10,8 billion in investment and the rejuvenation of our inner city will go a long way to achieving this.

The Inner City Rejuvenation Programme is not designed to stifle the work of informal traders and other businesses, but rather to create an environment that invites residents and tourists alike.

This will dramatically increase the influx of people into the inner city and increase the market to which they can sell, and bring with it considerable investment.

For this to happen, the city has to be made safer by ridding it of all illicit activity; buildings and infrastructure have to be restored in order to attract big business and investors, and make the city conducive for trade, inviting for residents and tourists.

This will take some time but we are committed to restoring order and dignity in our city, and informal traders are not forgotten in our endeavours.

Many of these initiatives will be supported by a funded budget which we are confident will bring the much-needed change our people fought for.

We believe this IDP highlights the fundamental spatial and economic realities of Tshwane and will further provide a baseline upon which the current administration can work from, in order to propel the city forward again.

The restructured IDP will achieve sustainability, address poverty, provide dignity and be responsible technically, fiscally and economically. Within Tshwane's context, the geographical areas and types of projects that are more likely to achieve these objectives will be those that address eradication of service backlogs, spatial restructuring and those projects catalytic to economic development.

We believe that the will of the people ought to be at the apex of our priorities and we need our people to contribute to the running of their city.

We want our people to be heard. Not just during elections but in the day-to-day running of their homes, streets and places of work.

Tariff hikes and affordability for residents:

In order to cater for underprivileged households, the City of Tshwane has in place the Indigent Programme, which allows eligible households earning a specific combined gross income to qualify for rebates, support or a services subsidy as determined by the Municipality.

In terms of the Indigent Policy, beneficiaries need to be re-evaluated every 24 months to verify their economic and social position. Depending on the outcome, qualifying beneficiaries will be re-registered.

To address the multitude of inefficiencies and fraud inherent in the database – where City officials and non-qualifying households were illegally receiving the indigent benefits – the City of Tshwane embarked on evaluation roadshows across Tshwane from September 2016 to call upon residents to reapply in order to affirm their qualification.

Our goal is to work towards a list that ensures that all those who qualify for social assistance receive the assistance they deserve, while removing those from the system who have benefitted unlawfully.

Madam Speaker

It is also common cause that when an institution is experiencing change there will be a lot of anxiety that requires delicate management.

Achieving our goals will require us to adhere to the two guiding principles of stabilisation and revitalisation, which will help us realise our commitment to better, more efficient service delivery.

These are terms that have guided the Mayoral Committee and myself through some of the most trying times in the resuscitation of the Tshwane government's ability to deliver better services.

The stabilisation of this new government is the critical foundation on which to create an environment for attracting investment into our beautiful city.

We were also abundantly clear that those who are leading this charge were ready to internalise the values and ethos of excellence that the City of Tshwane needs to make progress.

This meant that we had to be smart about how we use what little money we have, and use that money responsibly.

Madame Speaker

As unpopular as it was, we amended the macro structure to cut down on unnecessary expenditure on a top-heavy management structure that saw institutional duplication and not enough actual delivery on the ground.

This was for the purposes of creating a leaner and cleaner machine to ensure that the framework for efficient service delivery was in place to deliver professional services to our people.

We were able to recruit diligent senior management who have committed to striving for excellence and will be performance monitored on the basis of achieving our goals.

This will, in part, be supported by the adjustments budget we were able to pass unanimously, which will start to deal with the almost R2 billion deficit incurred by the previous administration.

During the formulation of the adjustments budget it became more and more clear that the former administration's management of public funds was nothing short of abysmal.

In preparing the adjusted budget for Council's consideration it was clear that the former administration did not care at all about the betterment of the people they were elected to serve.

They instead elected to prioritise self-interest.

This has had real implications for the City's finances and its capabilities.

By not investing in proper supply chain processes, the former administration wilfully allowed for millions of rands to be looted from Tshwane's coffers.

This is most aptly evidenced by the "Shoe Polish Debacle" to the tune of approximately R30 million.

Weak supply chain discipline also allowed for a panel to be set up to circumvent due process in the botched City Hall renovations, which will require more money to fix.

As such, a financially stable and viable City of Tshwane was the first priority in addressing the systemic problems that have given birth to so much discontent within our communities. This includes, but is not limited to, the drug trade and the associated illicit activities that accompany it.

This has also given rise to the tensions that have arisen in the past few months because of a lack of opportunities fostered by an incapable City.

It is for this reason that we have also prioritised the proliferation of EPWP job opportunities for the people of Tshwane.

Within the next financial year the City is looking to create 23 000 EPWP job opportunities for our people to alleviate the burden of poverty.

Importantly, we will ensure that these opportunities are distributed in a fair and transparent manner and not on the basis of party political affiliation.

This will be supported by the numerous projects we intend to commence within the coming financial year.

These job opportunities will be supported by the building of a new fire station in Mamelodi and, in doing so, ensuring that the people of Mamelodi have better access to this emergency service.

The creation of these job opportunities will also be made possible by a R660 million investment in our industrial nodes such as Waltloo, Rosslyn, Kangala and other identified areas with respect to bulk infrastructure that brings work opportunities closer to the people of those areas.

Through the introduction of an open-bid adjudication process, we will ensure that business done with the city is fair and free from corruption, as part of our commitment to being an open and transparent government.

We will also ensure that access to the work opportunities that flow from these projects is equally fair, equitable and free from corruption so that more of our people can benefit from the work being done in the city.

The City believes in making opportunities available to the largest number of people. Exclusion periods for those who were previously employed, ranging from one to three months, have been tailored to ensure that the EPWP does not repeatedly benefit the same group of individuals to the exclusion of others.

Significantly, this approach excludes councillors from involvement in the recruitment process in order to avoid the programme being abused for political purposes and vote-buying.

So, Madame Speaker,

The fight against corruption and the provision of work for our people has long since begun.

In order to get to this point, it was critically important to fully appreciate the complete and utter mess that we inherited from the hands of the former administration.

The poor political leadership and financial mismanagement of the past have put considerable strain on the City's ability to function and provide the services our people not only need, but in fact deserve.

Therefore, turning around the City's finances is our apex priority so that we can deal with the infrastructure that the former administration made no provision for and allowed to suffer from years of neglect with respect to preventative maintenance.

To put this in context, a meagre 4% was allocated for preventative maintenance of water infrastructure.

For a metro this size, it is almost criminal because it has real and meaningful implications for the City's ability to deal speedily with water interruptions.

To address this in part, the City made an initial R13 million investment into the restoration of water infrastructure in the last two months, and it has tendered for a R2 billion contract to refurbish, upgrade and replace some of the ailing infrastructure that was neglected.

In real terms, this means that more people across the city will have reliable access to water for everyday use.

This is not unique to our water woes, and it indicates the poor and irresponsible use of the City's money by those too preoccupied with vanity projects such as the mayor's mansion.

Speaking of the mayoral mansion and following extensive consultation, I am happy to announce that the City will be officially selling the mayoral mansion, which we have long believed to be unnecessary, and this can free up funds for other meaningful projects and programmes for the people of Tshwane who, as I have long asserted, are our true VIPs.

I wish to commit to the people of Tshwane today that the proceeds from the mayoral mansion will be earmarked to building houses for many of our people who need access to decent housing.

Despite this less than desirable picture we inherited and with the passing of the adjustment budget, I wish to reassure the people of Tshwane of this administration's commitment to turn the City's finances around.

Arguably our greatest achievement thus far has been to pass a fully funded adjustment budget as we currently formulate a realistic and progressive budget to put to Council at the end of May 2017.

While dealing with the high-level budget politics, we have held on tight to our commitment to providing services at the same time.

Hold on.

I'm still getting warmed up.

Like I said, it's just the beginning.

Water and Sanitation:

The National Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) published a notice in the Government Gazette on 12 August 2016 on limiting the use of water from the

catchment areas of the integrated Vaal River System for urban and irrigation purposes. A 15% curtailment on urban water usage was required.

The City of Tshwane, as at 16 January 2017, achieved 21,7% saving of water from the Vaal River System. This was due to the cooperation of its residents after the City launched an aggressive awareness campaign to inform residents and businesses, which included doing the following:

- Informing residents about the current water shortage situation and restrictions to be implemented
- Urging consumers to use water sparingly and to reduce water demand by 15%
- Urging residents to report water leaks
- Assuring residents that the City is prioritising and attending to reported water losses

The educational day-to-day activities by Water and Sanitation promote awareness, guide education and communicate the responsible use of water. They focus on the need to restore and preserve the integrity of our most precious resource.

The level of the Vaal Dam is now more than 90%, which has seen the lifting of water restrictions by the Minister. However, we continue to encourage our residents to continue to use water sparingly in order to avoid ending up with water scarcity in the future.

Water conservation must become a way of life and the responsible use of water as a scarce resource must continue.

We thank our residents for their discipline and patience in this regard while we work in earnest to ensure that we start dealing with the infrastructure backlog that continues to plague the City.

I am happy to announce that the MMC responsible for infrastructure, Councillor Darryl Moss, on Monday attended the project completion meeting for water pipe replacement in Soshanguve.

The pipes in Blocks AA and F were old asbestos cement pipes and, being past their design life, they were leaking profusely. The community requested a pipe replacement project, and the City was able to fit this into the overall programme.

The project took eight months and was valued at R10,8 million. 4 653 meters of pipe was replaced and 59 local labourers were employed.

Progress is being made.

Energy and Electricity:

Electrification of households plays an important role to the City at large. The supply of electricity to “new” households will improve the lives and living conditions of our communities.

A few areas were identified by the current leadership where new connections are planned. The projects are underway and other projects are completed. These areas include the following:

- Nellmapius X 24, where 1 000 connections were done in Ward 15
- Soshanguve South, X 19, has a planned number of 500 households to be electrified
- Mamelodi X 5, for 74 households
- Melusi X 2, for just over 200 households
- Winterveld, for 256 households

To date, more than 80% of households in the City have access to electricity. This goal is achieved through partnership between the City and Eskom. Although most people have access to electricity, the energy mix of the City is still not diverse. This is something that the City is working diligently to fix.

The department is focused on providing a sustainable supply of electricity and are investing in bulk infrastructure and network upgrading.

By achieving this goal, the City is providing an increase in households with access to electricity.

These projects include the upgrading and construction of new primary substations and high-voltage power lines. The following milestones have been achieved and the projects include but are not limited to the following:

Upgrading of Eldoraigine substation:

The new substation building and all the indoor equipment, including the 11 kV switchgear, control and protection panels, as well as all auxiliary equipment are installed and commissioned. The outdoor yard paving and fencing are completed. Work in the high-voltage yard is in progress, with the construction of the reserve bus bar and bus coupler already completed. The testing and commissioning of the reserve bus bar is in progress.

The construction of the substation building extension was completed as well as the installation of 11 kV switchgear, control and protection panels, and all auxiliary equipment. Most of the outdoor equipment in the high-voltage yard was also installed.

The contractor is about to start paving and fencing the high-voltage yard. The testing and cold commissioning of the 11 kV switchgear and protection and control panels are in progress. Progress on the site suffered delays due to constant work stoppages where the community insisted on local sub-contractors doing the work. However, the City is in constant communication with the local community to address their issues.

We will ensure that every corner of this vast municipality has access to safe, sustainable and affordable electricity. We are making strides.

We will ensure that every corner of this vast municipality has access to safe, sustainable and affordable electricity. We are making strides.

As I mentioned earlier, we and our partners in government, are committed to finding new and innovative ways to make the supply of electricity sustainable and affordable for our people.

In view of this, I am happy to announce our flagship policy on Embedded Power Generation, which promotes small-scale solar power generation by residents whereby they have the opportunity to sell their excess power back to the City.

Embedded Power Generation is essentially allowing small power generation by residents or small businesses for their own use, with the additional opportunity of allowing them to sell their excess power to the City, while at the same time being able to purchase power from the City when their own generation runs low.

In simple terms; residents can generate solar power from a roof-top panel during the day, and sell their excess to the City. At night, when the resident cannot generate solar power, they can purchase from the City. This is a major step in our renewable power policy and our first step in a real green power development.

The spare electricity generated can be used to make up during instances where we have a shortfall. This innovation mitigates both the economic impact and the inconvenience of load-shedding, and saves on the cost of buying electricity at peak rates.

We have begun to illuminate our city once again.

Roads and Transport

A meeting was held at the Dutch Reformed Church, Lux Mundi with the MMC for Roads and Transport, Cllr Sheila Lynn Senkubuge, as well as senior managers from Tshwane Bus Services (TBS), where concerns were raised by the commuters. The community further indicated that they have even established a WhatsApp group to ensure that there is a commuter communication platform that keeps them updated on bus arrivals etc.

In responding, the senior management acknowledged the shortfall and indicated that in resolving the current inconsistencies, the bus schedules have recently been revised in order to align with the resources currently available, ie 162 shifts with effect from November 2016. This is to maintain consistencies as well as to build commuters' trust.

TBS senior management also committed to establishing the Facebook page as requested by the commuters as it has been proven to be the effective means of communication.

One such query received from Facebook was from one Sbu Nunu from Block T, Soshanguve

He said: “Good morning Mayor. Can you kindly address the issue of tar road in block T, Soshanguve?”

This is indeed an apex priority in roads and transport, which we are seeking to address. Sbu and I are committed thereto that the roads of Soshanguve will be dealt with.

These platforms are not only about complaints, as the commuters also sang the praises of some of the improvements already implemented and the rapid response they normally receive from the TBS when they raise complaints. The commuters singled out a specific driver (Mr John Lesinga) who drives 1135 shifts and who, on more than one occasion, found a Laptop and managed to return it to the rightful owner who had left it unattended on the bus.

Thank you Mr Lesinga, for your honest and professional service to our people. Yours is an example that all civil servants should follow.

A visit to Bronkhorstspuit was conducted, where service delivery matters such as disintegrating roads, unavailability of grader drivers, potholes etc were discussed at length and site visits were then conducted so that we could have first-hand experience of matters raised, so that meaningful solutions can be found and pursued.

We also conducted a visit to Region 1, where various areas were visited to highlight the state of roads that were in a terrible state, and the poorly maintained storm water which is a problem that we identified as needing attention to avoid our people falling victim to the floods experienced late last year in Johannesburg and other parts of the province.

In order to resolve the above issues, which are more maintenance related, the regions together with Roads and Transport are to revisit the current maintenance plan with the intention of revitalising it to get alignment with the current burning issues of service delivery.

MMC Senkubuge, alongside her senior management is doing all that is possible to improve the seemingly broken-down relationship with the commuters. She further requested commuters not to hesitate when treated unfairly so that explanations can be provided to enhance service delivery.

A re yeng! Come along on this journey with us as we create a mobile and efficient city.

Housing and Human Settlements:

We, the City, have noticed that there is a high demand for affordable rental within the city, that outweighs the supply. The City has developed a project pipeline that will ensure that the affordable rental market is catered for.

Of these projects, Townlands, which is being implemented by Housing Company Tshwane, will yield 1200 units. Implementation will be done in phases as the project will be completed in 2019. Thembelihle Village, which is implemented by YCH, will yield 733 units. This flagship project is currently under construction and is being done in phases.

The first phase of 241 units has been completed and units have already been occupied since the 1st of February 2017. Over and above that, the City is in the process of developing an affordable rental housing strategic plan which will assist in accelerating the delivery of affordable rental stock.

In order to achieve this, the City is committed to working closer with its stakeholders; Gauteng Department of Human Settlements, Social Housing Regulatory Authority, Gauteng Partnership Fund and other relevant stakeholders in order to derive benefits that accrue from working together.

New homeowners rejoiced in Soshanguve Extensions 12 and 13 on 25 February 2017 when Cllr Mandla Nkomo, MMC for Housing and Human Settlements along with the Councillor for Ward 37, Cllr Sipiwe Montlha, and officials of the Housing and Human Settlements Department, handed over title deeds to properties to 216 residents.

The residents expressed their happiness after they were given the title deeds for their properties. However, there are 468 title deeds still to be handed over for two areas in the coming weeks.

Housing officials in Region 1 will continue to issue these title deeds. Therefore, people are encouraged to visit our offices to collect them.

Over and above that, the department is in the process of finalising the outstanding 1 460 registrations out of the combined project total of 3 198 properties.

The housing handover ceremony at KT Motubatse Hall in Soshanguve, was met with undue disruption by quarters of the community led by members of the former administration who were clearly still bitter about their electoral defeat. What is truly disappointing is that this was done in an attempt to disrupt the handover of much-needed housing and title deeds for the people of Tshwane who desperately need it.

In any event, we were able to make progress on our mandate to hand over title deeds and houses to eligible members of the community who have been waiting for this for some time. Despite attempts to disrupt the meeting, the handover of houses and title deeds proceeded.

Additionally, a total of 6 000 title deeds are ready and will be conferred to beneficiaries over the coming weeks.

The City of Tshwane is working with the provincial government to ensure that a range of housing opportunities are available for people of different income levels, and we are speeding up the delivery of title deeds to state-subsided housing so that recipients have legal ownership of their homes.

Projects currently being implemented include construction of tarred roads in Soshanguve Extension 12 and 13 where the community will enjoy dust-free streets. The main road is currently being tarred in Extension 13 and a total of 3,5 km will be completed by the end of the year, with the remaining 3,5 km to be completed in the new financial year. A distance of 3 km of internal streets has been tarred in both

extensions and the remaining 17 km will be completed in the next two financial years. A total of R46 million has been approved for this work in this financial year.

Under the multi-party government, Tshwane will continue to champion equitable and fair access to a range of housing solutions to deserving individuals.

This, like Rome, will take time but sit tight, people of Tshwane, change is here. It takes time but look at what we have been able to do in a short space of time.

And it is only the beginning.

Community Safety and Security

Governments across the globe have a duty to keep communities safe to protect the life and limb of their residents and to inspire investor confidence.

It is common cause that investors are more reluctant to invest in places where crime is rampant because this causes threats to human capital and the businesses they set up in any given locale, as was again highlighted in my meeting with the ambassadors and high commissioners from EU countries.

We received a petition from the Pretoria North community. The concerns raised by the community were: road traffic safety concerns, visibility of the Tshwane Metro Police and the general safety in the Ward.

The Speaker's office representatives together with the MMC for Community Safety, Cllr Derrick Kissoonduth, received the petition and a solid working partnership between different stakeholders were emphasised in order to ensure a safe city of Tshwane for all.

MMC Kissoonduth also met with religious leaders to discuss a plan of action around safety and security in the municipal area. The discussion also served as a channel to build strong working relationships with the different sectors within the Municipality.

This will be an on-going process. Although no resolutions were taken, a working relationship was established.

The USA embassy offered the City of Tshwane a training opportunity for the TMPD and opportunities for female Metropolitan Police officers to attend a Woman Leadership Institute (WLI) that will be held in Cape Town later in 2017. The meeting was used to strengthen the working relationships between the City of Tshwane and the USA. The embassy also offered consulting in terms of policing, policing management, policing strategies and leadership.

The Social Crime Prevention Unit conducted several awareness campaigns around the City, on the following issues: domestic violence, scholar patrol and road safety campaign. The TMPD Drug Unit, recorded 14 arrests for drug-related crimes in different parts of the city, and suspects were arrested for possession of drugs. The unit also made two arrests in connection with a stolen vehicle, and the vehicle was recovered. Several arrests were made in the Onderstepoort area for cable theft.

Drugs:

Appreciating that drugs are a scourge on our community and keep our citizens away from productivity or are driven to drug-related crimes and illicit activity, we recognise that the City needs a comprehensive region-specific focus on our drug problem to supplement the great work already being done by the Anti-Drug Unit we announced last year.

Our administration remains committed to fighting the drug problem in recognition of the devastating impact it has on our communities.

Our preoccupation is to fight the drug problem while creating opportunities for employment and productivity across the city to employ our people so that they may too live a better life and not be condemned to a life of poverty, or even condemned to death.

We have to rescue our lost generation from this and we have to leverage our regions and existing tools to make progress in this regard.

Some of the work in our regions has gone a long way in denting the problems we face with drug abuse as follows:

Region 1A Ga-Rankuwa/Mabopane

Five NPOs funded: Aga Sechaba, Kamogelong ya Sechaba, Kopano ke matla, Thusong Care and Support, and Fetoga Rehabilitation Centre. In the month of February, the NPOs managed to collectively reach 1 298 people, including direct service users, through programmes such as Service Users' Day in which they are identified for referral, workshops presented by the South Africa Tuberculosis Association, awareness campaigns, door-to-door campaigns, health talks, parent support groups and individual counselling to parents of service users.

Region 1B Soshanguve/Winterveld

This is one of the largest areas and has 13 NPOs: Letsema for Development and Democracy, Performance Improvement C&YCC, Tshwane North Outreach, Heaven's Defence Force, SANCA Castle Carey, Atlegang, SANCA Soshanguve, Botho Socio-Psychology, Africa entle, Dream Team Foundation, Morongwa Rehabilitation Centre, Are thabeng Youth Development, and Rock of Faith.

Activities include the "Ke Moja" programme, life skills training workshops, awareness campaigns, prayer sessions, prison tours for service users, support group sessions, dialogues, youth camps, sport tournaments, puppet shows, and wellness exhibitions in schools. A number of 2 597 people was reached and 153 service users engaged for intervention.

While we know there is still so much to be done in this regard, we encourage our people to work with us as we charter a renewed fight against drugs, which we hope to bring to all regions

We have made progress but work with us, this is only the beginning.

TshWi-Fi is here to stay:

Despite misinformed rumours that the City is cancelling TshWi-Fi, the City has in fact continued with certain projects like Wi-Fi.

We are, however, working to provide this service more sustainably by encouraging the private sector to come on board in order for us to extend, and not diminish, Wi-Fi usage for residents and businesses.

We are committed to provide our residents with broadband in a financially responsible manner that does not compromise other services.

The TshWi-fi service is operating as it always has with only standard site outages, and responses and repairs based on a service level agreement. There is nothing out of the ordinary from what we see at the networks.

Currently there are 1 050 live hotspots across Tshwane and all are operational. Unavailable hotspots are the result of power failures, fibre breaks or equipment faults, and these are all responded to and repaired as agreed with service providers. The current network operational uptime is above the agreed 95% level and is maintained at around 98% availability.

While some sites may experience long outages due to fibre breaks that could take a few days to repair, most of the sites remain consistently active and serve almost 300 000 daily connections across the city.

We will expand this service to open up new and innovative opportunities for the millions of people within our borders to participate in our economy and make a better life for themselves.

We thank you for your patience thus far. We encourage you to bear with us. It is only the beginning of creating a tech-savvy city.

Rosslyn as an industrial park:

Rosslyn is indeed the anchor of the City's industrial hub and is exceptionally well-positioned to serve the City's economic revolution in this regard.

As a City, we are proud to be associated with a manufacturer and assembler of passenger vehicles, which are mainly produced in Rosslyn and Pretoria East. According to the Automotive Industry Development Centre, Tshwane produces 40% of South Africa's automotive output.

The recent expansion plans by BMW (R6 billion) and Nissan (expansion from 40 000 to 80 000 units) in their plants in Rosslyn bears testimony that this industrial hub is full of potential and opportunity.

Looking ahead, a public-private partnership (PPP) project is key in the development of the Tshwane Automotive City – a special economic zone where the chain of auto suppliers will be located.

Wonderboom National Airport:

The City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality has identified the Wonderboom National Airport as one of the Municipality's most important strategic assets.

The City is now completing a comprehensive development programme aimed at maximising the value of this asset to the capital city of South Africa.

Furthermore, I unveiled a new corporate identity for the Wonderboom National Airport in October last year as part of the 80th anniversary celebration of the airport.

The new identity is part of a plan to expand the use of the Wonderboom National Airport to facilitate tourism and to grow the city's economy. Wonderboom National Airport is the only City-owned commercial airport in South Africa, presenting a unique opportunity to Tshwane to create a new hub of tourist and commercial activity.

TMPD's new unit for protecting our assets:

The City of Tshwane has a dedicated unit to deal decisively with illegal land grabs.

We have noted once again the spiralling of coordinated and ad-hoc land grabs and the illegal selling of vacant land in various areas. We emphasise that we remain sympathetic to the plight of those community members who have been on housing allocation lists for periods stretching longer than anticipated, however, we believe that no such frustration justifies the current criminal actions. We have once again called upon our Metro Police Land-invasion Unit to evict such occupiers and bring to law such perpetrators, and commend the work which the TMPD has done over the last week.

It is critical that the community be involved in tackling land invasion as community members can often be the victims of unscrupulous people unlawfully selling land. For instance, community members can promptly report information on land invasion or provide information on people suspected of selling municipal land. It is also important that respected community leaders be involved in tackling land invasion.

In addition to this the City has recognised the growing trend of cable theft that is not unique to Tshwane but has the potential to hamper the sustainable provision of services in our city.

Due to the high prevalence of infrastructure theft throughout Tshwane, we have established a Cable Theft Unit within the Tshwane Metro Police Department which renders the following services in order to mitigate the theft of cables within the city:

- Static guards posted at open trenches, new trenches and substations
- Regular patrols of trenches and hotspots, as well as substations
- Regular inspections conducted at scrap yards to ensure accreditation and compliance
- Response to cable theft complaints
- Apprehending the suspects involved in a cable theft crime

Not only do cable thefts cost the City money but they also result in service interruptions. The theft of power supply cables means that residents are denied the opportunity to enjoy uninterrupted services which they are entitled to.

Cable theft successes from October 2016 to January 2017:

Incidents responded to: 114

Arrests: 67

Value of recovered cables: R64 460

This cable theft we regard as sabotage in some instances.

This sabotage not only affects our electricity spaces but has spilled over into our water infrastructure.

This is with particular reference to the sometimes deliberate damage of our water pumps in Ga-Rankuwa and other places in which we have found enormous boulders that otherwise wouldn't have been found if not for human sabotage.

This has had adverse effects on our ability to pump water to our people.

Homelessness policy:

The City is experiencing a growing problem of homelessness within its area of jurisdiction. According to the 2010 South African Cities Network report, an estimated 200 000 people who are homeless in South Africa are found in big cities, for practical reasons.

The Statistics South Africa report published in 2012 estimates that there are 6 244 homeless people in Tshwane alone.

We have put in place a policy document to humanise the approach to street homelessness. They must not be victimised, but supported.

To this end, we will identify needs for care and support, facilitate the provision of appropriate care, prevent homelessness whenever possible and provide sustainable, long-term solutions to homelessness through a holistic reintegration strategy and action programme.

We realised the need to coordinate a multi-stakeholder response to the problem of homelessness. We have thus partnered with the University of South Africa, the University of Pretoria and the Tshwane Homelessness Forum to find sustainable solutions to this challenge.

Our policy document asserts the city as home for all who live in it, thus including the street homeless population, regardless of the causes of their homelessness and whether they find themselves on the streets temporarily or chronically.

The City will attempt to alleviate this problem by converting some of its property to repurpose it with a view to creating homeless shelters.

The policy document envisions a safe and secure environment for all who live in the city, both those currently living in permanent housing and those who are homeless. It therefore seeks to –

(a) advance the social, economic, spatial and political inclusion of street homeless people, thereby ensuring their enhanced and holistic freedoms as envisioned in the Tshwane 2055 document; and

(b) ensure an enabling institutional environment for facilitating such broad inclusions.

Conclusion:

Ladies and Gentlemen, Residents of Tshwane

I opened this speech with the words of Thabo Mbeki, “Let me begin.”

I did so to emphasise that we are at the beginning of a long journey to deliver on the change that the residents of this city voted for on 3 August.

That journey has proven to be an arduous one. We have by no means achieved all we have set out to achieve, but our journey is underway.

We do not have all the answers to all the challenges we currently face and we are working around the clock to ensure that all the needs of our citizens are heard, from Ga-Rankuwa to Centurion, from Eersterust to Waterkloof.

But we are making strides towards building a city that responds to the needs of its residents and expands freedom, fairness and opportunities for all.

You are all our people and we are working to give you a better life.

We ask for your cooperation, support and resilience.

We ask for your understanding during the tough times and your optimism during the dark times.

As I have said throughout my time thus far, Rome wasn't built in a day. But indeed it was built, and still stands today.

So too will the City of Tshwane.

Because, after all,

IT. IS. ONLY. THE. BEGINNING!