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CITY OF CAPE TOWN

29 OCTOBER 2014

SPEECH BY THE CITY'S EXECUTIVE MAYOR, PATRICIA DE LILLE, AT THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING ON 29 OCTOBER 2014

Good morning, goeie môre, molweni, as-salaam alaikum, shalom.

I would like to remember Bafana Bafana Captain, Senzo Meyiwa, as well as Phindile Mwelase and Mbulaeni Mulaudzi – all exceptional South Africans who recently lost their lives under tragic circumstances.

May we please have a moment of silence.

Thank you.

Mr Speaker,

We have continued our mission of broad-based reconciliation through redress.

To date, the City has spent approximately R45 million of the R170 million set aside for the first phase of 463 units as part of the Langa Hostel Transformation Project.

Construction of 463 rental apartments in Langa began as part of the first phase of the project and will be built over the next two years on the Old Depot Site in Langa.

The start of the project in Langa is a significant milestone in our efforts to ultimately eradicate the hostels inherited from the apartheid housing policies.

These new homes, which are two-bedroom apartments with modern comforts, will allow people who have been living in the apartheid-style hostels for as long as 40 years to finally have a dignified home.

And in Hangberg, we are making great strides with the work that we began three years ago to heal the rifts in that community.

The City purchased four sites in Hangberg for the provision of subsidised accommodation in the form of City rental stock and construction has begun at two of them.

These two sites will immediately provide an opportunity for the City to build 142 City rental units in close proximity to employment opportunities, key transport routes, social amenities and schools within the existing surrounding area.

This will provide the foundation for clean, liveable spaces for the Hangberg community to enjoy.

I am pleased to say that we will commence the retrofitting of ceilings for over 40 000 houses, with the first phase delivering 8 000.

These houses were built before 1994 and just after without ceilings, and retrofitting means that we will be engaging in redress by installing the ceilings.

These projects are among the many that we are undertaking to redress the legacy of apartheid spatial planning.

Indeed, this week, I experienced the spatial change we are making when I conducted a ride-along on the N2 Express MyCiTi service to Mitchells Plain.

Since its launch on 5 July, approximately 110 000 people have boarded the buses on the direct route between Khayelitsha and Mitchells Plain and the city centre.

The service has been in great demand with a steady uptake of passengers.

The N2 Express route, as top-up service to the existing public transport services in the area, connects thousands of people to work opportunities daily.

Furthermore, it allows residents from Khayelitsha and Mitchells Plain to connect seamlessly to social amenities in areas such as Sea Point, Hout Bay, and Canal Walk, breaking down the walls of apartheid.

In addition, in line with our commitment to create a safe city, I am pleased with the safety and security measures as the City has 60 law enforcement staff dedicated to the entire MyCiTi network to ensure the safety of commuters and buses.

During the protest action last month where buses were vandalised, these officers were instrumental in containing the violence and ensuring that damage to more buses was prevented.

The City is investing R14 million annually to place these law enforcement staff along MyCiTi routes and public transport interchanges to ensure the safety of passengers.

As this service becomes an ever more critical network for commuters tired of being disrupted by vandals destroying trains, the need for additional security will be essential.

But on top of its direct benefits, the N2 Express has a major empowerment advantage as 66% of the vehicle operating company which operates the N2 Express is owned by former taxi owners in Mitchells Plain and Khayelitsha.

For the N2 Express, the City made a capital investment of R200 million for the construction of bus stations and stops and the procurement of buses, while the investment to drivers for their training was R2,5 million.

In just a few years, the MyCiTi network has seen an extensive expansion whereby the City links communities from areas like Hangberg, Mitchells Plain, Khayelitsha and Atlantis to the city centre and many other areas.

But as much as we are trying to transform this City, others are trying to destroy it.

Sadly, their efforts are most keenly felt by the poor.

On 30 September 2014, the City had to close down its Hout Bay housing office and maintenance depot after protestors attempted to burn down the building.

When City officials arrived on the scene, they found that tyres had been set alight inside the building, causing extensive damage.

Offices in the building were vandalised, equipment was stolen, and some of the furniture was even chopped up into small pieces for no apparent reason.

Since this incident, the housing office and maintenance depot have been reduced to rubble due to the acute vandalism.

This is a community that really cannot afford to lose City services and yet the political actions of a selfish few are causing just that.

However, the City's Human Settlements Directorate has made alternative arrangements so that a level of service delivery can still be provided to the Hangberg community.

Meanwhile, construction of the first phase of the City's new Community Residential Unit development in Hangberg is well underway.

It consists of three multi-storey blocks comprising 71 units in total. Work on the first block, which entails 26 units, is progressing well, with the brickwork on the first floor completed to roof height.

And yet, once again, the City's Brick Skins project, which is also currently underway in specific blocks of flats in the Hangberg area, had to be halted intermittently due to interference by certain community members.

It appears that the City's efforts to improve the lives of our residents in need are being torn down repeatedly by some individuals, to the disadvantage of the broader community.

This is a recurrent theme.

Destruction by vandalism and illegal protests that destroy property, disrupt budgets, and disrupt programmes, frankly disrupt the mission to build a Cape Town for all.

Again in another community that cannot afford it, a traffic signal and pedestrian crossing signal in Philippi was destroyed on 30 September 2014.

An isolated grouping that has no regard for our Constitutional democracy, City property, or their fellow residents, destroyed this infrastructure in Govan Mbeki Drive and Emms Drive.

This vandalism occurred a day after the very same traffic light on Govan Mbeki Drive was repaired, following the destruction that was caused during a previous incident in the area.

It will cost approximately R480 000 to replace the traffic signal and pedestrian crossing signal.

I think that those who attack these facilities live in an outdated version of South Africa where problems are solved by violence.

After 20 years of democracy, I think that it is time we start to move into a different phase of our development – one where we embrace our shared future.

For me, this way of thinking has become the most important legacy of the World Design Capital: understanding what design means and using it to transform life.

Those who work within the traditional design industries already appreciate the importance of it. Here, I am thinking of more traditional design ventures in the creative industries and product development.

But what was not so easily appreciated by many in this city is how design is an essential component of the way we live our lives and our approach to the way we work, live and play.

It is about understanding how structured creativity can unlock tremendous value in a range of sectors and experiences, not least government.

This is because at its heart, design is about improving the experience, and hence the life, of the individual.

Entrenching that understanding and making us appreciate that the individual's experience should inform everything we do is the greatest legacy of this year.

And our approach has made sure that this legacy will spread itself through a variety of sectors.

When we received the award, we worked hard to ensure that we brought in the universities, large and small businesses, the traditional creative industries, government, ordinary people and the 111 wards in Cape Town.

This powerful coalition has ensured that the project of the World Design Capital will become an operational reality in the everyday work of these sectors.

Given this, the legacy of the World Design Capital will be felt over time in the lives of everyone in the city who interacts with these institutions in some way.

And in many ways we have started embracing these principles of design and excellence in meeting the challenges of a modern city.

And for this, we are being rewarded and recognised for our efforts.

I am proud to announce that the City of Cape Town's Skilpadsvlei restoration project has won a national wetland award in the category of Wetland Stewardship at the National Wetland Indaba 2014 held in Gauteng.

This category applies to those who have made a significant contribution towards securing the effective and sustainable management of wetland areas.

This achievement is a fitting tribute to the unending commitment and hard work put in by the City's Environmental Resource Management Department.

Furthermore, the MyCiTi infrastructure along Blaauwberg and Potsdam Roads was last Thursday presented with the 2014 SAICE Regional Award for Technical Excellence in Civil Engineering.

This section of the MyCiTi network links the areas of Dunoon, Killarney and Table View with the city bowl, Camps Bay and Sea Point.

The City has also received the 2014 Community Development Project of the Year Award in recognition of its Community Residential Unit (CRU) Refurbishment Programme – a community development programme developed by City to change the lives of its tenants in CRUs.

The CRU Refurbishment Programme is ongoing in various areas across the city and was launched as a result of the City's dissatisfaction with the maintenance conditions of CRUs.

More than 6 500 Council rental units of the 7 775 initially identified in 2008 have already been upgraded as part of this programme.

In addition, the City's Pelican Park project has also been recognised by the SAHF as the country's Best Integrated Housing project. This is an innovative public-private partnership project and the City's partner, Power Construction, also received an award for this project.

As at the end of June 2014, 607 houses had already been handed over at the City's Pelican Park development.

It is expected that the remaining 1 400 State-subsidised houses will have been handed over by December 2016.

The total cost of this development is approximately R700 million, which includes State and private investment.

I am very pleased to say that we, Cape Town, have moved to fourth place in the annual Conde Nast Traveller Readers Choice Awards.

The one million votes from close to 77 000 Conde Nast Traveller readers contributed to putting Cape Town into the mix as a global favourite.

All of these accolades demonstrate a City that is at the forefront of innovative and creative approaches to build on our strengths to create fuel for the future.

But this proof of good leadership is not enough for those who believe more strongly in the power of political stunts to push narrow agendas.

I am afraid the politics of cheap stunts is all too common in South Africa.

Perhaps the most serious example of it recently has been the release of the so-called Lwandle Inquiry's report.

Did we have to spend R 4 million on an inquiry to determine whether SANRAL acted lawfully on 2 and 3 June this year?

This is of special concern when considering that each of the five inquiry members earned R2 500 per day and the chairperson, Advocate Potgieter, earned up to R20 000 per day for the duration of the inquiry.

Whilst the Minister jumped at the opportunity to waste taxpayers' money by enriching her comrades through the façade of an inquiry, the City facilitated humanitarian assistance to those affected.

This included mattresses, blankets, hot meals three times a day, vanity packs and baby packs.

This is in addition to the shelter which we continue to provide in the Nomzamo Hall.

It is of the deepest concern that the ANC and its affiliated organisations continue to abuse legal instruments such as strikes and inquiries to score the very cheapest of political points.

It is sad to say, given its proud past, that the ANC is almost completely morally bankrupt today.

It is that bankruptcy that prevented the Dalai Lama from receiving a visa to come and discuss peace, which the ANC claims to have fought for.

Because of that, a Peace Summit – one which would have celebrated our laureates – has to be moved to Rome; a move which we support with a heavy heart.

While the ANC wrecks this country's goodwill at home and abroad, those tasked with service delivery continue with the good work of changing people's lives for the better.

This includes the electrification of Enkanini in Khayelitsha.

This area is supplied by Eskom but the City has volunteered to pay for electrification.

I am pleased to announce that today, 29 October, 407 homes will be receiving electricity and lights for the first time.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, let me say that we should be proud of the work that we are doing in the City.

Driving the agenda of reconciliation and redress forward is everyone's business.

But to really make our efforts a success, we need everyone – including the ANC and its proxies – to work for a better future.

Let us play politics at the ballot box and not through vandalism and questionable inquiries where the poor are the tools and the common good is the ultimate victim.

Thank you, baie dankie, enkosi.

End

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