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**Office of the
Executive Mayor**

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR CLLR JULIA LATA MATHEBE ON THE OCCASION OF HER ELECTION AND SWEARING IN.

Honourable Council Speaker, Kgwediebotse Chego
Honourable Chief Whip, Cllr Choris Phokoane Honourable Chair of Chairs Cllr Peter Rankoe,
Honourable, MPAC chairperson, Cllr Mabatane Mathale
Honourable chairpersons of section 79 committees,
Honourable chairpersons of standing committees, Honourable Cllr Matsetela, leader of the official
opposition party,
Honourable leaders of other political parties represented in Council, the DA, SADA, SAMEBA and the
Bolshevicks Party,
Regional Secretary of the ANC in Sekhukhune, Comrade Tala Mathope,
Magoši a gešo, maapara Nkwe,
Speakers, Mayors and Chief Whips of Local Municipalities,
The former Executive Mayor, Cllr Keamotseng Stanley Ramaila, Phogole A Marumo,
Former Members of the Mayoral Committee, Municipal Manager, Mme Maureen Ntshudisane and
section 57 managers, and team Sekhukhune, Our friends from the media fraternity,
Sechaba sagešo sa selete sa Sekhukhune.

Thobela!

Honourable Speaker, firstly let me congratulate you on your election as Speaker of our Council.
Having been in that position in the past few months-I must say that I truly don't envy you.
But on a serious note, I am confident that you are the rightful person for this enormous role and that
you will ensure that we all perform our duties as councillors.

I would also like to congratulate Cllr Choris Phokoane for his election as Council Chief Whip And Cllr
Mathale Mabatane as MPAC chairperson respectively. Your task is huge and demanding. But we
have no doubt that you will do your work in an impartial manner.

Honourable Speaker,

Tomorrow, His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa will deliver the State of the Nations Address
and in next two days on the 11th of February 2022, we will mark a 32-year anniversary since anti-
apartheid stalwart, our beloved Nelson Mandela walked out of the apartheid prison as a free man.

Madiba's freedom from apartheid prison, which followed the release of other freedom fighters, among them Elias Motsoaledi, with whom he had spent many years behind bars, became the epoch-making moment, not only for the oppressed people of South Africa, but to the world at large. President Mandela personified the resilience of the oppressed majority, who endured the brutality of the repressive regime.

His life of selflessness and service to humanity, embodied the spirit of Ubuntu/Botho, which embraces values of communal way of living, in a way teaching us that: *Motho Ke Motho Ka Batho*. Speaking at an event of Amnesty International in November 2006, Madiba remarked, and I quote: "Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of fundamental human rights. Everyone everywhere has the right to live with dignity, free from fear and oppression, free from hunger and thirst, and free to express themselves and associate at will," close quote.

Honourable Speaker,

We also have among us today, as special guests of the Executive Mayor, the family of liberation struggle veteran

Ramphongwe Reuben Makitla.

He was also known with his combat names as Ramph Motsumi or Ntate Motsumi.

His elder son Kaludi Godfrey Makitla is in the public gallery, and I humbly request that he stands up for acknowledgement. (Thank you, you may be seated).

Ntate Mutsumi was born on the 8th of August in 1926 at Bloempoot, Dennyton.

He was part of the 5000 volunteers who we deployed throughout the country by former ANC president Chief Albert Luthuli to collect information on how the people want to be governed, which culminated in the adoption of the Freedom Charter on the 26 June 1955. He left the country in 1962 to be part and parcel of the formation of Umkhonto We Sizwe

This trained soldier of Umkhonto We Sizwe, was part of delegates at the watershed Morogoro Conference.

He passed away in 1995, three years after his return from exile.

We salute this selfless son of the soil, may his revolutionary spirit rest in peace.

Honourable Speaker,

Our task in this municipality is monumentally huge.

And we must petition Madiba and Ntate Mutsumi's undying spirits to guide us as we take it head on. The residents of Sekhukhune district municipality who do not have access to drinking water, have

every right to be angry at us.

In villages across the length and breadth of our land, our fellow residents are pinning their hopes on their elected public representatives to provide them with this basic service.

We have a constitutional obligation to provide them with drinking water and other important services.

And doing so is not a matter of charity, but of justice!

It is an act of restoring their dignity.

Failure to provide them with drinking water, would be a violation of human rights that are enshrined in the Bill of Rights.

Therefore, their anger with us is justified, if we don't provide them with services they expect and deserve.

Majority of us are new in this Council.

We were only elected hardly three months ago. Despite this, we must never fall into the temptation of blaming those who came before us.

As a matter of fact, the blame game will be of no benefit to our people.

However, we must emphasise that going forward, it cannot be business as usual.

All of us, including the administrative staff of the municipality must introspect and genuinely ask ourselves if we are doing enough, both individually and collectively, to provide services our people truly deserve.

Our officials must be reminded that we will pursue a sound, efficient, effective, transparent and accountable administration.

We will heighten our oversight role and without fear, hold accountable those who do not do their work.

Those who are not willing to work have no right to be here.

Acts of corruption, fraud, maladministration and nepotism go against everything this administration stands for, and these will not be allowed to happen under our watch.

In the recent past, the image of our municipality has suffered a huge harm.

We have become the laughingstock.

We are known all over as a municipality that cannot take care of the public's funds.

Public funds are deposited, by our officials, into private bank accounts.

Our officials make duplicate payments.

It is as if people treat public funds as their own. Some people here do as they wish with the hard-earned funds of our ratepayers, meant to service our communities.

Whichever way you look at it, Honourable Speaker, whether it is fraud, corruption or sheer incompetence, this is totally unacceptable-and someone must account.

And we will stop at nothing, to ensure that those who are responsible, are pursued and held to account.

The importance of good governance cannot be emphasized enough.

We want to congratulate our four sister municipalities, Elias Motsoaledi, Ephraim Mogale, FetakgomoTubatse and Makhuduthamaga Local Municipalities, for attaining unqualified audit opinions for the past financial year under review.

While at the district municipality we still await outcomes of the Auditor-General, we will ensure that

the audit action plan is implemented.

All of us must lead by example.

Honourable Speaker,

It is important that we outline targets that we believe are attainable over the next 100 days.

Top on the list is an audit of all bulk water schemes and projects, with a special focus on those that are delayed. To this effect, we shall update our people on the interventions within the first 100 days in office.

In the same vein, we will seek an audience with Minister of Water & Sanitation Honourable Senzo Mchunu, to fast-track the collaborative process he has already put in place to unlock the De Hoop Dam Scheme.

Top on the priority list, regarding all our projects, is to ensure that going forward, we prevent

conditions that make us to forfeit conditional grants back to the fiscus.

Some of the interventions in this regard, include making sure that all critical posts in the IWS Department and the Finance and Treasury Department are filled.

Lack of personnel with adequate skills hampers our planning and implementation efforts.

We are also aware of the unhappiness of local business forums, and that to some extent the disagreements tend to delay the implementation of our projects.

It is important to reiterate that we support the empowerment of small and emerging business enterprises, as is required by law.

But in the interest of providing services to our people, we will lend an ear to the local businesses, along with the traditional leadership in this regard.

One of the pressing issues we must attend to is the spillage of sewage from either sewer lines or wastewater treatment plants in areas such as Motetema, Leeufontein, Praktiseer.

This is a matter that must be attended to with the urgency it deserves.

We will also prioritise the review and updating of the indigent register. This will enable us to know with certainty, who are the people we must provide with free basic water services.

But equally this will enable us to identify residents who afford and must pay for services they receive.

It is crucially important that people who afford to pay for services do so, because we must improve on our revenue collection in order to sustain the provision of these services.

The water infrastructure that provides certain portions of our district with drinking water, be it to business or residential areas, must be maintained in order to function optimally.

Those who have the means must pay for these services.

Therefore, one of the tasks for the new MMC of Budget and Treasury is to ensure that she produces a revenue enhancement strategy that is credible and implementable.

The strategy must clearly outline how we are going to ensure sound revenue protection and effective revenue management. Our municipality will not increase the provision of services and sustain them, unless we pay special attention to the revenue collection.

Honourable Speaker,

The state of local economy in our district requires a detailed attention.

Young people, who are supposed to be the most economically active in our population, are unfortunately bearing the brunt of joblessness.

Lack of requisite skills, inadequate access to information, resources, training and mentorship, are compounding to this crisis.

This is a matter that cannot be postponed.

To this effect, we have set aside R2-million through which our Planning and Economic Development Department will practically support the SMMEs and Co-operatives owned by young people and women.

We have the Sekhukhune Development Agency, which is a special purpose vehicle established by the municipality in line with the Companies Act.

The SDA's mandate is to attract investors with the aim to create jobs and grow the district's economy- beyond the mining, tourism and agricultural sectors.

Is it doing this?

What are the bottlenecks that impede its work? How are we going to capacitate this agency to do its work optimally?

How do the works of the SDA and that of the district municipality's Department of Planning and Economic Development intersect, and are there duplications of duties?

These and many other hard questions must be responded to, if we are going to successfully reposition our district as the industrial economic hub it is meant to be.

This also speaks to the role of the mining companies operating in our district.

The mining sector plays an all-important role to the country's economy.

But with about 27 mining operations in our district, the expectations of mining communities and the people of Sekhukhune in general are therefore not misplaced. It is undisputed fact that majority of mining communities from where these mining operations make profits, continue to live in abject poverty.

We will sit down with captains of this sector, to discuss if the existing social labour plans are indeed inclusive and successful in bringing labour,

government, business and communities into agreement.

All these will happen under the purview of the District Development Model, which seeks to do away with poor planning and working in silos.

We are grateful that the provincial government as led by Premier Chupu Stanley Mathabatha, has allocated funding to get the FetakgomoTubatse Special Economic Zone underway.

The SEZ is a catalyst for economic growth, industrialization and mineral beneficiation, and will localise the various links of the value chain, with economic opportunities trickling to local communities.

In the spirit of inter-governmental relations, we will improve the collaborations between the four local municipalities with the district municipality, particularly on our mandate as a water authority and water service provider.

This collaboration includes the establishment of a forum of mayors, ward councillors and Magošhi, that will meet quarterly to appraise them on the water related projects.

Our ward councillors are at the coalface of service delivery, and it is unfair for them to account on

matters they are not fully aware of and have role in shaping or guiding meaningfully.

Honourable Speaker,

All of us are here to provide services to the people of Sekhukhune.

As of today, we are launching a campaign called OPERATION TLEMA TEKKIE-RE NWE MEETSE. This is a call to action to all of us, from the Executive Mayor to Member of Mayoral Committee, from ward councillor to municipal officials at every level.

Those whose work is out at the construction site- must be out there, doing their work.

Under OPERATING TLEMA TEKKIE-RE NWE MEETSE, the Executive Mayor herself will join the blue-collar workers at the site, and brave the scorching heat, if that is what takes for the people of Sekhukhune get water.

We must hit the ground running.

At the end of the 100 days in office, we shall give an update on how far we would have gone on all the above-mentioned programmes.

Honourable Speaker,

In accordance with the powers vested in me as the Executive Mayor of Sekhukhune District Municipality in terms of the Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 section (60), sub-section 1 (a), I hereby take this opportunity to announce members of the mayoral committee and allocate them responsibilities in various portfolios:

1. MMC for Budget and Treasury: Cllr Maleke Mokganyetji
2. MMC for Infrastructure and Water Services: Cllr Bella Kupa
- 2.1. Deputy MMC for IWS: Cllr Merram Malatjie 2.2. Deputy MMC for IWS: Cllr Jan Mohlala
3. MMC for Corporate Services, Cllr Frank Ratau 4. MMC for community Services Cllr Stanley Ramaila
5. MMC for Planning and Economic Development Cllr Baatseba Leshaba

6. MMC in the Office of the Executive Mayor, responsible for Youth, Sport, Arts & Culture Cllr Kuki Sefala

7. MMC in the Office of the Executive Mayor responsible for Women, Children, the Aged and People with disabilities, Orginia Mafefe

I further designate the following 5 MMC's as full-time councillors in line with the MEC Gazette No:3201

1. MMC Frank Ratau 2. MMC Bella Kupa
3. MMC Stanley Ramaila 4. MMC Maleke Mokganyetji 5. MMC Baatseba Leshaba

I also hereby designate MMC Maleke Mokganyetji as the leader of government business.

Honourable Speaker, these are the men and women, I am convinced are up to the task and capable of assisting our municipality to provide services to our people. We wish them all the best.

Honourable Speaker,

This is not a day for long speeches.

But allow me to take this opportunity to thank my predecessor and fellow comrade, Cllr Keamotseng Stanley Ramaila, for laying the foundation on which we shall continue to build.

I also want to express my appreciation to my political party, the governing African National Congress, the oldest liberation movement in Africa and one of the oldest in the world, for showing confidence in me to steer this mammoth task of restoring the dignity of our people through the provision of services.

I want to acknowledge the dedicated workers of this municipality, particularly those who continue to go beyond the call of duty.

The people of Sekhukhune are relying on you to provide them with services.

To the various political parties that are represented in Council-I want to say that we are colleagues. I am appealing that we make common cause in addressing the service delivery challenges facing all our people without discrimination.

I also want to assure the people of Sekhukhune that we are here to serve them. That we are mindful of their cries, and we are prepared to collaborate with them in ensuring that they receive services.

To members of the media-you are our social partners.

As members of the fourth estate, we appreciate the fact that you have considerable latitude to criticise us as public office bearers.

We will remain accessible to you, as we seek to work together in keeping the people we have been elected to serve, updated about services and programmes of their government. Finally, I want to thank my family for being with me through thick and thin.

Honourable Speaker in conclusion,

As we reiterate our thanks to the people of Sekhukhune for giving the African National Congress another chance to champion the developmental agenda, and as we remind ourselves about our duties and responsibilities, we repeat the words of Amilcar Cabral when he said, and I quote: " We must practice revolutionary democracy in every aspect of our party life. Every responsible member must have the courage of his responsibilities, exacting from

others a proper respect for his work and properly respecting the work of others. Hide nothing from the masses of our people. Tell no lies. Expose lies whenever they are told. Mask no difficulties, mistakes, and failures. Claim no easy victory."

I thank you.