

SPEECH BY DAN PLATO

JEWISH BOARD OF DEPUTES

23 OCTOBER 2009

Good evening (INSERT PROTOCOL)

I would like to extend a hearty welcome to everyone who has travelled here from across South Africa and from other parts of the world. Although you have some very important issues to discuss here this weekend, if you can, I invite you set aside some time to enjoy some of attractions that Cape Town has to offer you. Hike the mountain, tour the winelands, eat the good food, relax on the beaches, see the views, or soak up the culture and the heritage.

Later tonight you are going to hear about the Jewish community and its potential. A large part of that potential comes from having a strong, cohesive community, which is extremely valuable. From the City of Cape Town, I would like to tell you how much we appreciate the presence of the Jewish community in this city, and make it clear that we are very interested in working together with you in anything that will benefit our residents, particularly those who live in poverty.

In many parts of Cape Town, like in many parts of South Africa, there is a social crisis. The fruits of this are easy to see: young people who waste their lives away on sex, drugs, alcohol and violence. Poverty is a problem, but the key thing that is missing is often strong social structures that can guide and support young people to become capable, responsible members of society and make a contribution to the development of the community around them.

As a strong, established community, the Jewish community is an example to others, and you are one of the rocks on which a city like Cape Town is anchored. Without these stable, productive and principled communities, everyone suffers.

The local Jewish community is also one of the rocks on which the City of Cape Town must build, in our quest to improve the lives of everyone. Strong communities have a responsibility to make their strength available to help others, and I know that you are already doing a lot to support those around you. We thank you for this, and we look forward to working with you in the future.