

SPEECH BY DAN PLATO

MEAT-FREE DAY LAUNCH

29 JULY 2010

Good day ladies and gentlemen,

People, including myself, eat far too much meat nowadays. I can still remember a time when eating meat was something we used to really appreciate; when it was reserved only for the most special occasions on account of its price.

Since then, things have changed. In today's world, you don't need to have a large salary to eat a lot of meat anymore. Not so long ago, many people had no choice but to eat vegetables instead of meat. Nowadays, however, people tend to neglect their greens due to the relative affordability of meat.

In fact it is even worse than that; it is actually more expensive to buy healthy food and vegetables. In our townships there are a lot more butcheries than there are fresh vegetable stores. Part of the reason is that there is simply less demand for vegetables.

When people are not eating properly, society has a serious problem. It affects how children develop and it affects how they grow up to live their lives. A healthier city is a more productive city, and a more productive city benefits everyone.

Mr Tozie Zofuka is now going to talk about why eating less meat is more sustainable for our planet.

Cape Town needs to work to make itself more sustainable if it is to continue to thrive in a changing world. As the City of Cape Town, we are working to do this in many different ways.

One example is the Integrated Rapid Transit system which we are just starting to operationalise. This cost saving alternative to private car travel will make public transport more attractive, and it will be integrated with new walking and bicycle networks that are sustainable and healthy ways for people to get around.

It is difficult to get people to change their habits. I know this because I also need to change. In our culture, we tend to assume that people who can afford a car should buy and use one. Likewise, we have a culture of saying that people who can afford to eat meat every night should do so. This is something we must work towards changing over a long time, in many different ways.

The good news is that the City of Cape Town is already working with residents, the private sector and civic organisations to introduce changes, and we are ready and willing to do more. Times are changing, and Cape Town must be a city that leads the way.

Thank you.