

CITY OF CAPE TOWN

MEDIA RELEASE

13 MAY 2009

SPEECH BY ALDERMAN DAN PLATO ON BEING ELECTED EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF CAPE TOWN

COUNCIL CHAMBER – CIVIC CENTRE, 13 MAY 2009

Mr Speaker, Aldermen, Councillors, City Manager, Officials, Media, Members of the public
Family and friends.

I am deeply honoured to stand before you today as the Mayor of Cape Town.

Taking up this post, in service of the people of this city, is a wonderful moment in my life.

I wish to thank God for the strength He has given me to come this far.

I ask Him to guide and support me as I face the challenge that lies ahead.

I also want to thank my wife, Andricia, for her patience and support through my years of service to Cape Town.

And I thank the councillors of this chamber for your vote of confidence in me as the new mayor.

I am determined to prove you have made the right choice, on behalf of the electorate you represent.

I will not fail you.

I am well aware that I have the shoes of a World Mayor to fill.

I agree with Dawie when he wrote in "Die Burger" one Saturday that "wie ook al vir Helen as burgermeester gaan opvolg, dit is groot skoene om vol te staan." –en voorwaar dit is groot skoene om vol te staan.

I wish to thank and pay tribute to my predecessor, the Premier of the Western Cape and DA National Leader, Helen Zille.

Helen, thank you for all you have done for the people of Cape Town.

You are truly a remarkable person and leader, and it has been a pleasure to serve the public at your side.

In the City of Cape Town, you brought a new dimension to service delivery through your ethic of hard work, transparency and efficiency.

You also gave the staff of this city a huge morale boost when you earned the title of World Mayor.

That day, you also helped to put the Western Cape, South Africa, and Africa as a whole on the map.

As the singer Tina Turner would say – you are simply the best!

We have been a great team in the City so far, and I look forward to continuing that relationship with you as we work together as Mayor and Premier for the benefit of Cape Town.

In the past some areas of service delivery in the City have been stifled by the Provincial Government.

This is especially so in the case of housing and public transport.

I am looking forward to greater co-operation and co-ordination between the City and Province now that the voters have chosen a new administration in Wale Street.

It is daunting to fill big shoes.

But I am fortunate to have inherited the excellent team this Multi-Party Government has built over the past three years.

This includes a dedicated Mayoral Committee, our City Manager, Achmat Ebrahim, and his executive management team.

It also includes thousands of dedicated staff members, from firefighters to utility servicemen and women, from legal advisors to nurses.

These men and women have served the city for years or even decades, and are finally working within a single, efficient organisational structure, with pay parity, clear reporting lines, and stable finances.

Let me also take this opportunity to specifically thank my dedicated staff members, Beverley Van Reenen and Jemayne Andrews for their hard work and support.

It is an honour to take up the reins of our leaner, stronger administration, to drive service delivery for the final two years of this Multi-Party Government's term of office.

Working with this team, I am eager to continue serving the people of Cape Town, under the same banner of good governance.

Ek sien daarna uit om na die mense van Kaapstad te luister en sal altyd probeer om hulle eise te akkomodeer so ver moontlik. Ek sien ook daarna uit om met die personeel van die stad saam te werk. Ek is n spanspeler! As n span gaan ons hierdie stad maak werk.

Soos u weet, is ons n veel party regering aangesien daar geen party in hierdie raad is wat n volslae meerderheid het nie. Dit is die keuse van die mense, ons kiesers tot en met die 2011 verkiesing waar die da hoop om voort te bou met hul goeie vertoning in die Wes-Kaap en landswyd.

As we head towards the 2011 local government elections and for the years that follow, I invite you to continue walking with me on the path we have charted in our Integrated Development Plan (IDP).

Our public participation process for the IDP showed that our citizens want jobs, first and foremost.

This message came across again in the recent elections. During the campaign various political parties put a lot of emphasis on service delivery, housing delivery, safety and job creation.

Bearing in mind that the municipality is already the biggest employer in the Western Cape, with approximately 22 000 staff, we cannot address job creation directly.

My number one priority will therefore be to make this a government that promotes job creation through regional economic growth.

We must work toward this goal, in all the functions we perform under the Constitution.

That means building a solid platform of infrastructure and services.

Cape Town's roads, public transport, electricity distribution, sewerage systems and water supply must be solid enough to keep pace with economic growth.

Urban regulation, administrative systems, traffic and by-law enforcement must be effective enough to establish an ordered environment.

Recent studies have indicated that businesses are constrained by several issues that local government can address, including:

- Poor electricity supply

- Poor public transport

- Acute poverty

- Red tape at municipal level and crime which has in the past been repeatedly singled out as barriers to starting a business or operating a business or for foreign investments.

In a world where skills and capital can go where they wish, we must make Cape Town the destination of choice.

Investors create jobs, and drive development, whether they are foreign or local investors.

We must also be clear that the functions for local government, highlighted in schedules 4 and 5 of the Constitution, are very specific.

We can not, and must not, pretend to be able to do everything and anything for the citizens of Cape Town.

Raising people's expectations with false promises is one of the cardinal sins of politics.

Also, with a recession coming, revenue will be in shorter supply, and government will have less money for services.

Against this background, I would like to mention some of our major tasks for the two years that lie ahead.

Firstly, we need to continue increasing our rate of capital investments.

Over the past three years we have raised our capital investments from an average of R1 billion per year to nearly R4 billion in the current financial year. Much of this has gone into new electricity, sewerage and water systems.

In hierdie verband het ons reeds meer as 'n ½ biljoen rand op sy gesit wat oor 'n tydperk van drie jaar sal strek as deel van die stad se voorbereidings vir 2010, en is dit ons voorneme om meer te investeer in dié verband.

Dit is ook ons strewe, om fondse te bewillig vir afvalbestuur en rioolwerke ten einde te verseker dat ons industriële ontwikkelings nie nadelig beïnvloed word nie.

Ons het ook reeds begin investeer in die verbetering en opgradering van ons paaie en uitbreiding van spoornetwerk in samewerking met die provinsiale regering en Spoornet.

Our main challenge when it comes to infrastructure investment will be rolling out projects quickly and efficiently.

Another major task is to continue addressing the shortage of adequate shelter in Cape Town.

The provision of housing is one of the city's biggest challenges.

We have made some progress by increasing the rate of delivery from a previous average of 3000 housing opportunities per year to nearly 8000 opportunities so far this financial year.

But in Cape Town three main human settlement challenges remain.

Firstly, there are an estimated 300 000 to 400 000 families in Cape Town without adequate access to services and shelter. To address this backlog, over 20 000 new housing units must be built per annum for the next 15 years. At the same time, we need to alleviate overcrowding and inhumane conditions in many of the 222 informal settlements of Cape Town. We have made a good start with our informal settlement upgrade programme, and our doubling of funds for free basic services to the poor.

We must continue on this process while balancing the needs of informal settlement dwellers with the needs of shack dwellers. We must be fair, and stick to the housing waiting list, so we avoid creating resentment and divisions between different communities.

Secondly, apartheid-era urban segregation is still in place in many areas. Most subsidised housing developments have been built on the periphery of the city, far from work opportunities, amenities and facilities.

Thirdly, new and existing settlement areas are often characterised as uni-functional "housing areas", with a lack of integration with other land uses and transportation. We must continue to foster partnerships with the private sector and business in order to build integrated communities, with shared facilities and amenities in close proximity to job opportunities.

With the support of the Provincial Government and the private sector, the City must commit to do all it can to meet these challenges. We cannot do it on our own.

Another major task facing us in the City is to improve the state of our roads, and of our public transport.

Our Integrated Rapid Transit system is well underway, and we look forward to seeing its first phase implemented within the next year.

We are working against tight deadlines ahead of the FIFA 2010 Soccer World Cup. Even more than the Green Point Stadium, the IRT project is going to test our abilities.

The City is reviewing its consultations with the existing public transport industry while work on IRT infrastructure for the first phase continues.

This is in line with President Zuma's suggestions at the meeting with the South African National Taxi Council in April.

The City will work closely with the National and Provincial Departments of Transport to ensure the successful implementation of the IRT system.

This will benefit Cape Town's commuters and those parts of the City's existing public transport industry which will be upgraded as a result of the IRT.

Then there is the World Cup event itself, and many, many other challenges.

I am under no illusions about the challenges that lie ahead.

And I understand how high the stakes are.

Over the past seven years we have seen more and more 'service delivery protests' in the communities of our city.

We know that citizens have been waiting for too long for too many promises made by careless leaders.

I am not here to make big promises I can't keep. I intend to be honest about what we can and cannot do.

In turn, it is my plea to the communities of Cape Town to assist in protecting the services we provide, and to respect the staff who provide them.

We are here to serve, as best we can.

Indeed, with our finances in good shape, and with our staff structures in place, we are in a good position to deliver on all of our IDP goals.

Let us move forward and draw inspiration from the natural beauty surrounding us, and the rich diversity of our citizens.

Let us remember that Cape Town is one of the greatest cities on this planet, and we are privileged to be part of making it so.

I thank you.

END

ISSUED BY: Communication Department, City of Cape Town

MEDIA ENQUIRIES: Alderman Plato tel 021 400 1304 cell 076 832 5505