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## PROGRESS UPDATE ON THE RESTORATION OF THE JOHANNESBURG ART GALLERY BY EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF JOHANNESBURG, CLLR DADA MORERO, 19 NOVEMBER 2025

The Johannesburg Art Gallery (JAG) is not just a home for artistic masterpieces; it plays an essential role in preserving the history and heritage of Johannesburg. In recent months, we have made significant strides in both restoring and reimagining this vital cultural asset. The Johannesburg Development Agency has spearheaded these efforts by bringing on board a skilled heritage specialist. They have conducted in-depth structural assessments, paving the way for a well-planned and responsible restoration process.

We are excited to report that the Provincial Heritage Resources Authority of Gauteng has formally approved the City's application for the necessary structural interventions in the restoration project. We have also secured all required approvals, covering key areas such as traffic impact, stormwater management, fire safety, water usage, and land surveying, which means we can move forward without any hitches. To protect JAG's invaluable collection during renovations, we have set up three temporary facilities at the Johannesburg City Library, Museum Africa, and the Brixton Multipurpose Centre.

These locations meet the insurance, environmental, and security standards essential for housing such significant artworks. We are collaborating closely with the South African Heritage Resources Agency to ensure that our temporary arrangements comply with national guidelines. Once these facilities are up and running, we will invite stakeholders to evaluate them, reinforcing public confidence in the preservation of the collection. We aim to keep the JAG active during the restoration by continuing exhibitions, public programs, and educational activities around the city.

The JAG paper collection, comprising essential books and journals, will be available at the Johannesburg City Library, ensuring that engagement with the gallery's spirit continues even during repairs. Additionally, we have partnered with Standard Bank to unveil a special exhibition featuring 145 artworks recently returned from South Korea. These pieces have undergone thorough inspection and verification, and this exhibition will coincide with the upcoming G20 Summit, offering a prime opportunity to showcase Johannesburg's rich cultural heritage on an international platform.

I had the privilege of meeting with the French Ambassador to discuss potential collaboration with the City of Johannesburg. I've been informed that the French government, under President Emmanuel Macron's leadership, has expressed interest in attending our exhibition and supporting our restoration efforts. On the governance front, we have sharpened oversight in line with the Deed of Donation. The Art Gallery Committee, consisting of representatives from both the national government and civil society, is now operating effectively.

Their first meeting took place on 23 October 2025, during which they approved the City's Relocation and Refurbishment Plan for JAG. We are also revisiting our partnership with the Anglo-American Johannesburg Centenary Trust to rejuvenate the City's trustee membership, promoting closer collaboration and increased support in line with our donation policies. Lastly, we are organising a major seminar to gather academics, arts practitioners, heritage experts, architects, Friends of JAG, the Johannesburg Heritage Foundation, and other stakeholders. This initiative will help us collaboratively shape a sustainable long-term vision for the gallery. The Johannesburg Art Gallery is a cornerstone of our city's identity. Its restoration signifies our dedication to preserving our cultural heritage for future generations.

We owe this to those who paved the way for us, those who continue to establish the foundations of our culture, and those who keep reimagining it. We are grateful to our partners, institutions, residents, and friends of JAG for their contributions to this vital endeavour. Together, we strive to restore JAG as Johannesburg's foremost art institution—a lasting symbol of heritage, creativity, and community pride. We invite dignitaries, private sector representatives, government stakeholders, and G20 delegates to come and experience the rich cultural offerings our city has to offer.

Thank you.