



**MAYORAL LECTURE BY EXECUTIVE MAYOR, SELLO 'DADA' MORERO AT THE
SOWETO THEATRE ON 20 SEPTEMBER 2026, JOHANNESBURG**

TOPIC: JOBURG OUR FIRST LOVE - A RE BUWE

DUMELA PROGRAMME DIRECTOR, MR. CLEMENT MANYATHELA

You once interviewed me and iyo. Till today I'm scared of you. Thank you for agreeing to direct this programme. Not many are brave enough to talk to you. We appreciate your work, of holding us accountable through talking.

GREETINGS TO OUR DEPUTY MINISTER, DR. NAMANE MASEMOLA

GREETINGS TO DEPUTY MINISTER DAVID MAHLOBO

MEC NOMANTU NKOMO-RALEHOKO

MADAM SPEAKER, MARGARET SHERON ARNOLDS

MEMBERS OF THE MAYORAL COMMITTEE

GREETINGS TO THE LEADERSHIP PRESENT.

GREETINGS TO THE RESIDENCE OF JOHANNESBURG.

GREETINGS TO SOUTH AFRICANS, AFRICANS AND THE WORLD.

I asked my team to invite Jonasi because I have been meaning to talk this man for a while. He can't come to our screens, cause havoc and think that he can just disappear. He must come an account for his... let me not say it otherwise I will make headlines again.

Before we start, please can we rise, light a candle and have a moment of silence for all the women who were brutally murdered.

Light the first candle for the candle lighting ceremony.



Play song by Ndenzel' Uncedo (Be My Helper) Hymn 377 Lyrics Sung by Esethu Siwe
(Joyous Celebration 25)

Hlala, ho hlala nami
Lishonil' ilanga
Ubusuku bufikile Nkosi (hhayi)
Mandi, mandingasali
Ndingenay' uMncedi (Nkosi)
Ndenzel', ndenzel' uncedo ngokuhlala nam'

Hlala nami Baba (hlala, ho hlala nami) hlala nami
Lishonile (lishonil' ilanga)
Ubusuku, ubusuku bufikile Nkosi
Baba, mandingasali (mandi, mandingasali)
Ndingenay' uMncedi (ndingenay' uMncedi)
Ndenzele (ndenzel', ndenzel' uncedo ngokuhlala nam')

Hlala nami Baba (hlala, ho hlala nami) hlala nami
Lishonile ilanga (lishonil' ilanga)
Nabu nobusuku, ubusuku bufikile Nkosi
Hayibo mandingasali (mandi, mandingasali) mina
Ndingenaye (ndingenay' uMncedi)
Ndenzele (ndenzel', ndenzel' uncedo ngokuhlala nam') ndenzele nami
Nkosi ndenzele (ndenzel', ndenzel' uncedo ngokuhlala nam') hlala nami
Bawo ndiyacela (ndenzel', ndenzel' uncedo ngokuhlala nam') ndicel' uncedo



Buya, buyakhaw'leza obubomi bami
Ndiya, ndiyashiwa zezo mhlaba izinto
M'na ndibona iingugquleko, iingugquleko zodwa
Wen' ongagugquki, oyohlala nam'

Tshini ndenzel' (ndenzel', ndenzel' uncedo ngokuhlala nam')
Bawo ndiyacela (ndenzel', ndenzel' uncedo ngokuhlala nam') hlala nami
Usizo lonke luvela kuwe Jehovah (ndenzel', ndenzel' uncedo ngokuhlala nam') hlala
nami

Ndifuni uncedwa nguwe (ndenzel', ndenzel' uncedo ngokuhlala nam') hlala nami
Nkosi ndenzel' (ndenzel', ndenzel' uncedo ngokuhlala nam') hlala
Hlala, hlala, hlala, hlala (ndenzel', ndenzel' uncedo ngokuhlala nam') hlala nami
Ah, ndiyacela Bawo (ndenzel', ndenzel' uncedo ngokuhlala nam') hlala nami

YOU MAYBE SEATED.

PROGRAMME DIRECTOR,

Enough is enough.

No society should accept what is going on in our community. We need God, because this cannot be our normal. We have saying that says:

“Mmangwana o tshwara thipa ka bogaleng!”

Meaning, a woman holds many heavy burdens, daily hardships, and courageous sacrifices often carried through life. Already this symbolises her strength. Now we think we can test her strength by killing her. No man can handle this level of bravery. It is for



this reason we must always protect our women. If they feel unsafe, the whole world is in danger.

Section 152(1)(d) of the South African Constitution establishes the promotion of a safe and healthy environment as a core object of local government. The Constitution further recognises the South African Police Service (SAPS) as a single, national police force with the responsibility to investigate crimes, maintain public order, and prevent national security threats. And for us, as this important sphere of government, we derive our powers from the South African Police Service Act and our mandate is to focus strictly on three areas:

1. traffic enforcement,
2. policing municipal bylaws, and
3. visible crime prevention within their specific boundaries.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

It means no woman should be murdered in our spaces.

It means we have a responsibility of creating safe spaces.

It means at the core of our development lies community safety.

For every service delivery function in the City, a safer city objective is added to the programme. This is done to enhanced visibility, safety, and improve the quality of life in communities across Johannesburg. For us building infrastructure alone is not enough. Recently I had an engagement with the taxi associations. Collectively we are saddened by what is going on. As a result, we have agreed to join forces, partner and fight gender-based violence head-on. We will become the eyes and ears of the police and our communities.



We will not turn a blind eye. We will go into dark spaces and make them safe for our women to walk, run, live and play. Every woman must feel safe to walk in the street of Johannesburg because Johannesburg is our first love and we love our mothers, women and children.

I call on society to continuing partnering with City. Alone we will not win. Together not only will go far, but we will save lives.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

There is so much to do in the City of Johannesburg, and we have done a lot. Even, when I was Mayor for 25 days, we did something. As we implement, we must never forget to talk. Sometimes you may think you are on the right path, later you realise you are on the wrong path. We once told a story about the naked mayor. Let me not get sidetracked, but let us say we have collectively planned, implemented and innovated and the results are showing. The world has seen our efforts. What was committed through the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and its Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP), we have:

1. **On water provision:** Daily potable water distribution grew steadily, from an average of 1.6 billion litres in 2021/22 to a peak average of 1.8 to 1.9 billion litres by 2024/25, consistently meeting SANS 241 drinking-water standards. Over the term, more than 7,700 additional households gained access to basic water services, with over 5 billion litres of water transported to stationary tanks serving informal settlements. Water-conservation gains included a decline in per-capita consumption from 267.65 l/c/d (2021/22) to 244.69 l/c/d (2024/25), supported by AI-enabled leak detection.



2. **On sanitation Services:** Sewer blockages cleared within 24–48 hours of notification were consistently maintained above 80–95% across most years of the term. Over the five years, more than 7,000 additional households gained access to basic sanitation, alongside sustained servicing of over 60,000 VIP latrines and 13,000 to 14,000 chemical toilets annually in underserviced areas.
3. **On electricity Supply:** Over 21,000 dwellings were connected to mains electricity over the term, and more than 5,000 public lights and dozens of solar high-masts were installed annually, including under the G20-linked accelerated lighting programme. Renewable energy initiatives included five completed microgrids (Shalazile, Vukani, Amarasta and Vlakfontein) benefiting informal settlements, 9,794 solar water heaters installed, and the launch of the City's first electric vehicle charging station in March 2026.
4. **On waste management, Air Quality and Climate Action:** The waste diversion rate from landfill nearly doubled, rising from 18.9% (2021/22) to 31.9% (2025/26 year-to-date), with a record over 711 thousand tonnes diverted in 2024/25 alone. Good air-quality days rose from 181 (2022/23) to 240 (2024/25), supported by the "Clean Air Jozi" campaign and revised Air Pollution Control By-laws. Johannesburg achieved an A-Leadership rating from the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) for the first time and met all five C40 Leadership Standards during the term.
5. **On biogas:** we recently broke ground on a new 50-tonne-per-day Robinson Deep Landfill Biogas Pilot Plant in Turffontein to convert organic waste into renewable energy. Envisaged to Process about 50 tonnes of source-separated biodegradable waste daily using anaerobic digestion. Construction is set for completion by March 2027, followed by plant commissioning and a 12-month operational testing phase. We welcome the supported by the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA),



the Global Environment Facility, and the UN Environment Programme. This is an addition from the Northern Water Treatment Plant, where we previously implemented a biogas-to-energy project capturing methane from wastewater to supply 1.1 MW of electricity to the treatment facility. We must not forget our Waste to Energy Project, which demonstrates our innovation to solve challenges. The City treats 500 thousand tons of residual waste and generates about 30MW of electricity, which creates an estimated 400 jobs. This project assists us to divert one third of waste from landfills.

6. **On housing and human settlements:** Groundbreaking of the Southern Farms Mega City project (Region G) and commencement of the Tanganani mixed-typology development (targeting 9,129 units) advanced the City's integrated human settlements pipeline. Approval of the Sites and Services, Temporary Emergency Accommodation, and Allocation policies improved the classification of housing delivery and emergency response. The Department was renamed from Housing to Human Settlements, aligning with the national shift toward sustainable, integrated settlement planning.
7. **On public transport:** Metrobus refurbished 105 buses (2021/22), grew passenger numbers from 3.4 million to 4.9 million, and operated 31.6 million fatality-free kilometres across the term. Introduction of a cashless fare system lifted annual revenue from R75.2 million to R84.1 million (11.8% growth) in 2024/25, while 706 SMMEs received approximately R1 billion in transport linked economic support.



8. **On health services:** The City sustained COVID-19 vaccination infrastructure (up to 75 medical sites) and rolled out 254 ward-based outreach teams across 101 wards in preparation for National Health Insurance. 86.85% of clinics achieved Ideal Clinic status, and annual Patient Experience of Care surveys recorded satisfaction scores of 80–84% across the term.
9. **On public safety and emergency services:** The Integrated Intelligent Operating Centre expanded CCTV coverage (574 City-owned and 6,800 Vumacam cameras), lifting incidents detected and responded to from 674 to 1,574, and improving EMS critical dispatch times from 60% to 84%. Proactive fire-prevention measures — 6,000 building inspections, training of 26,000+ community members, 15 new fire engines and a new CBD fire station — contributed to a 24% reduction in fire outbreaks and improved structural-fire response from 60% to 71%.

In 2019 we inheriting a broke City. Fact not fiction. For us this meant, rebuilding financial systems and putting in place controls. We are grateful for the trust you have shown in us.

In 2024, we asked for your patience in managing the City's finances. As required by legislation, we opened our books and demonstrated to the world that Johannesburg is experiencing financial challenges. Managing this task has not been easy.

In 2025 we reimagined Johannesburg and today we are beginning to see the power of our thoughts. We thought and planned for the:

1. Optimisation of Municipal Operations
2. Accelerated Service Delivery
3. Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)
4. Civil society and community-led Initiatives.



5. Energy security and renewables
6. Water infrastructure modernisation
7. Digital transformation
8. Inclusive economic growth

We were the first City in South Africa to establish the Joburg Bomb Squad, re di trends setters. Keboa ko Cape Town, the Mayor has just established the Ghost Squad, which explains the behaviour of Magogo. Once again, I'm getting distracted. Let me focus.

Our Bomb Squad is a voluntary specialized unit assisting the City to arrest crime and grime in the city, to fight lawlessness in the city, to unlock service delivery bottlenecks and accelerate delivery. Business Intelligence Gathering is at the core of the work of the Bomb Squad. This team and the City's administrative team managed:

1. To activate rapid response teams in response to reported service delivery hotspots.
2. To be the eyes and ears of the Executive Mayor.
3. To activate rapid interventions to address lawlessness in the city.
4. To execute of a minimum programme of high impact visibility programme that resulted in
 - The monitoring and fast-tracking of the ten key points as identified and announced by the Executive Mayor during the SOCA debate on the 6th of May 2025
 - Implementation of Pothole programme
 - Execution of Grass cutting programme
 - Operational traffic lights across the city
 - Elimination of illegal refuse dumps across all communities
 - Fixing of streetlights in townships and on the highways
 - Addressing sewerage spillages in townships and informal settlements and



- Formalization of informal settlements.

Every day we are on the ground.

We are in your homes, shops, cemeteries, clinics, clubs and on the road. Ke shotta ka young people, le ko kayi. Please invite us to your spaces so that we can talk and shape the future of Johannesburg.

DID WE LISTEN?

When we asked you to tell us about the Joburg you want to see, are you seeing it?

PROGRAMME DIRECTOR

Today we must talk.

Lets talk about us, as s Zonke would sing.

"It's always about ya, and what you gonna do for me today. Cause you're not feeling good. Tonight we're gonna talk about feelings. Feelings, can we talk about?"

We need to talk about the difficult things. Governance and leadership are one of those difficult things. Some of you may be positive or negative. But some of you may want to o bue...ka eng? At the end of the day, we must talk and talking must form part of our culture because the Constitution demands we talk and plan together.

In the African culture we talk during good and bad time. Through talking we solve problems. Data from Statistics South Africa tells us we are South Africa's largest city and the economic engine of the African continent, home to approximately 5.9 million people across seven administrative regions (A to G). This makes it the biggest metro by



population size in South Africa. Johannesburg's population constitutes about 37% of the Gauteng population and 9% of South Africa's overall population. It is estimated that currently, there are 2.29 million households in Johannesburg, up from 1.4 million in 2013.

Most people migrated to the City of Johannesburg in search of work and better opportunities. Johannesburg continues to attract migrants seeking economic opportunity and access to services from other provinces in the country. Moreover, the city also attracted migrants seeking political asylum, and refuge from different countries throughout the continent and beyond. While migration has had many benefits such as cultural, political, and social plurality, it also presented several challenges as the city needed to accommodate more people in the already stretched resource pool. Most people who came to Johannesburg moved to the city from other parts of Gauteng (55%). A further 33% are born in South Africa but in another province, and 13% were from another country. Black Africans remained the dominant population group at 80%, followed by the White population at 9%. The Coloured and Indian/Asian population both comprised only 5% of the Joburg population.

We must welcome migration into the City. On the flipside, we must also talk about the service delivery pressures it has created. This pressure is most visible in informal settlements, backyard accommodation, subdivided properties and lower-cost parts of the inner city. The practical planning issue is not only how many people live in Johannesburg, but where new households are forming and whether local infrastructure can support them. Every time we try solve for this challenge our legal team reminds us about the City of Johannesburg v Blue Moonlight Properties, which instructed the City to provide temporary Emergency Housing Programme in the National Housing Code. The aim of the Programme is provide grants to municipalities for temporary relief, which includes land, basic services and/or shelter. It further covers people in exceptional housing need who



are homeless and/or face an immediate threat to life, health or safety through no fault of their own, including homeless caused by a declared state of disaster.

DISTINGUISH GUESTS

Our challenges are real and complex.

In 1998 we as a nation began our local government agenda by adopting the White Paper on Local Government. Which is our benchmark to compare what we envisaged in 1998, and the realities in 2026. These realities are reflected in the National Development Plan and our own departmental plans and municipal strategic documents.

Today, local government is confronted with complex challenges:

1. Governance, financial management and administration challenges;
2. Non-viable municipalities due to apartheid spatial planning; and
3. Systemic issues around powers and functions.

Solving for these challenges requires leadership, and strong partnership. South Africa belongs to all its people. The City of Johannesburg belongs to its residents. We all have a right to the City. It is for this reason we must constantly circle back to the NDP and reminds ourselves of the following words as articulated by the NDP:

“Our homes, neighbourhoods, villages, towns, and cities are safe and filled with laughter. Through our institutions, we order our lives. The faces of our children tell of the future we have crafted.”



Never leave a good challenge to waste, rather I should say it is important to turn each challenge to an opportunity.

CHALLENGES ARE PART OF LEADERSHIP.

Recently, we argued that we cannot budget our way out of a R220 billion backlog using municipal resources alone. Nor can we borrow indiscriminately. We must combine reform, prioritization, credible project preparation and partnership. As the City we have put these solutions on the table for discussion. We must:

1. **Protect and renew the infrastructure we already own:** Renewal must be driven by asset condition, service risk and economic consequence - not only by political visibility. A new facility cannot be called progress if the network feeding it is failing. We must strengthen risk-based maintenance, high-impact service operations, asset data and accountability for repeat failures. Every rand spent must reduce service risk and extend the productive life of the asset.
2. **Reform the trading services that underpin the city:** New money cannot simply be poured into unreformed systems. The City is strengthening revenue protection, ring-fencing, smart metering, loss reduction, cost control and performance accountability across its utilities. City Power's Cost of Supply Study indicates that reducing electricity losses from approximately 27% to 15% could unlock up to R3.5 billion in additional revenue without a further tariff increase. That is the scale of value hidden in operational reform.



3. **Treat urban renewal as economic and spatial transformation:** We see Johannesburg's inner city not as a collection of isolated buildings, but as a productive urban system. The Archbishop Desmond Tutu Precinct planning process is one practical expression of this approach, integrating heritage, mobility, walkability, public space, local enterprise and investment within a clear implementation and urban management framework. Renewal must combine law enforcement and building compliance with affordable housing, safer streets, reliable public transport, support for traders, adaptive reuse and private investment. Urban renewal cannot become urban exclusion. The existing residents, workers and businesses of a precinct must share in the value that renewal creates.
4. **Turn public transport corridors into investment corridors:** Transit-oriented development must integrate transport, land release, bulk services, mixed-income housing, commercial development, last-mile safety and faster development approvals. It is not simply the placement of buildings near a bus route. It is the deliberate reduction of the distance between people and opportunity. Infrastructure investment along Rea Vaya and other strategic nodes must unlock denser, mixed-use and more inclusive development.
5. **Apply a harder test to the idea of a smart city:** The term 'smart city' is too often used as a marketing phrase. Johannesburg applies a more practical test: does the technology make a service more reliable, transparent, accessible and affordable? A smart city detects a leak before it becomes a crisis; sees where electricity is being lost; predicts equipment failure; dispatches crews using live information; allows a resident to track a service request; processes applications faster; protects



its digital systems; and enables businesses to transact with confidence. Broadband is now a basic economic utility.

6. **Move from a project wish list to an investable pipeline:** Every major project requires a credible business case, lifecycle costing, a revenue or funding model, land and approvals, clear risk allocation, measurable social impact, a procurement pathway and a responsible delivery owner. Only then can cities blend the right sources of capital. Municipal revenue and grants must fund public-good infrastructure. Disciplined borrowing and development finance should support long-life and revenue-backed assets. Public-private partnerships should be used where affordability, value for money and risk transfer are demonstrable. Climate finance must support water resilience, clean energy and waste reform. Developer contributions and land-value capture should help fund infrastructure around renewal and transit nodes. The approximately R3.8 billion KfW facility supporting City Power's infrastructure pipeline demonstrates how long-tenor development finance can be connected to a defined reform and investment programme. Financing is not only about the cost of capital. It is about the credibility of the institution and the readiness of the project.
7. **Infrastructure must create jobs:** It must create work during design and construction, and it must create a more productive economy after completion. Johannesburg attracted R26.6 billion in investment over the past year and recorded a net increase of 23,000 jobs in the first quarter of 2026. The task now is to sustain that momentum through reliable infrastructure and faster delivery. Our infrastructure programmes must support local procurement, artisans, apprenticeships, township suppliers and small businesses. At the same time, they



must open well-serviced sites for housing, industry, commerce and innovation.
Public investment must crowd in private capital while protecting public value.

IN CONCLUSION,

We fought for freedom.

We fought for our space.

We also fought for the City to be inclusive and integrated.

In support of the National dialogue, which is a citizen-led process initiated by President Cyril Ramaphosa to address critical national challenges and shape a shared 30-year vision for the country, let us keep talking because Baba thina Sinjengamajuba

Baba thina sinje

Sinjengamajuba

Baba thina sinje

Sinjengamajuba

Baba thina sinje

Sinjengamajuba

Hallelujah

Sinjengamajuba

Ntate rona re tje

Re tje ka Maeba

Ntate rona re tje

Re tje ka Maeba

Ntate rona re tje



Re tje ka Maeba

Hallelujah

Re tje ka Maeba