

**2005 STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS BY
THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF JOHANNESBURG,
COUNCILLOR AMOS MASONDO**

27 JANUARY 2005

Madame Speaker;

MECs and Members of the Provincial Legislature;

Executive Mayors;

Members of the Mayoral Committee;

Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Leaders of all Political Parties;

The Chief Whip of Council, Councillor Bafana Sithole;

Fellow Councillors;

The City Manager, Pascal Mloi;

Managers and Officials of Council;

Fellow Citizens;

The Media;

Distinguished Guests.

Madame Speaker, we meet again at the opening of the Johannesburg Council, a Local Legislature, to reflect on the past, to consider the present and to look at the year ahead. In this City, this has now become both a tradition and an established practice. So Madame Speaker, we gather once again to affirm the continuation of a culture of accountability, to demonstrate in practice that those who work for Council, the public representatives as well as the leaders of this Council, are answerable to the people.

For the past four years we have been guided by the understanding that local government is local democracy in action. The need to interact with the people has remained uppermost in our minds. We have understood that local government hinges not only on periodic and regular elections but also on an active participatory process that ensures ongoing consultation with the various communities and engagement with the organisations of civil society.

We have continuously remained aware that Local Government is the sphere of government that is closest to the people. The sphere of government that deals with the bread and butter issues – service delivery aimed at addressing the day-to-day needs of local residents. The public representative would

therefore be located at the coalface and thus will tend to absorb the pressure as they grapple with the question, together with the people, how to speed up change and ensure that we improve the quality of life of every resident for the better.

We have also consistently sought to position local government as an economic role player of significance, a government that is committed to economic development, wealth creation and employment.

Madame Speaker, we are mindful that as we gather here we do so in the last year of our five-year term in office. The year in which we say a lot has been achieved. But of course we need to add that much much more still needs to be done. We are therefore at that time and period where all political parties and similar bodies will have to go back to the people to seek a new political mandate. Once again it is election time.

In this regard, we are expected as different political formations to engage in robust, frank and open debate but to avoid narrow, shortsighted and self-serving point scoring. Some may ask how do you stop these politicians from

playing to the gallery. Of course Madame Speaker, those who succumb to this temptation will be judged and dealt with by the electorate.

Election time also implies that there are a number of tasks that we will have to carry out. This Municipal Council will have to do the following:

- Assist the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), which is charged with organising and managing elections, to provide logistical support and popularise elections;
- Make available required competent personnel; and
- Engage in voter education and promote other related civic responsibilities.

As we gather here we remain aware that this meeting occurs at an important time in the history of our country, when the people of South Africa have just celebrated 10 years of Freedom and Democracy. All of us without exception have a responsibility to defend and deepen this achievement.

In 2005, the people of South Africa will be celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Freedom Charter. This document that informs both our Constitution

and various legislation, let us all be reminded, was adopted in this City at Kliptown on 26 June 1955. We cannot ignore such an historic moment.

The late president of the African National Congress (ANC), Oliver Reginald Tambo, spelled the true meaning of the Freedom Charter and its implications to the country and our people in the 1980 January 8th statement in the following manner: “ The Freedom Charter contains the fundamental perspective of the vast majority of the people of South Africa of the kind of liberation that all of us are fighting for. Hence it is not merely the Freedom Charter of the African National Congress and its allies. Rather it is the Charter of the People of South Africa for liberation ... Because it came from the people, it remains still a people’s Charter, the one basic political statement of our goals to which all genuinely democratic and patriotic forces of South Africa adhere.”

This was true then and remains true today. This Charter remains a programme of our people to realise a truly democratic, non-racial, non-sexist, united and prosperous country.

We are also meeting almost nine months after the national and provincial elections at which the African National Congress put forward the manifesto: **‘The People’s Contract to create work and fight poverty’**.

We have to bear in mind the President’s State of the Nation’s address delivered in Parliament last year, especially his remarks on the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) aimed at creating work opportunities and empowering our people with relevant skills. He stressed the need to strengthen local government and promote patriotism. We must heed his words that we have to strive to be effective and efficient in what we do.

The President has also urged us to respond to the diverse political economic, social and technological challenges of the process of globalisation and especially the regeneration of Africa. He has challenged us to be part of the search for a new world order and reinforce a broader local government initiative towards a more equitable society that is responsive to poverty and the related ills that afflict humanity.

In addition, if local government is to become an instrument to effect transformation, we must continue to pay specific attention to the following issues:

- Effective service delivery;
- Engage with communities in a way that truly responds to their needs;
- Engage with Ward Committees and local communities on such matters as the IDPs and Budgets in a way that enhances public participation;
- Transform the Apartheid legacy and its remnants;
- Use Community Development Workers (CDW) to strengthen service delivery at a local level;
- Strengthen Project Consolidate by specifically paying attention to revenue collection and our billing system;
- Getting and doing the basics right at all times; and
- Address the complex challenges of urbanisation and migration by putting emphasis on the creation of an inclusive society.

Madame Speaker, the national and provincial governments' 2014 targets remain an important guide to some of the work that we do. These include:

- Reduction of both unemployment and poverty by half, as well as the provision of the necessary skills required by the economy;

- Deepen constitutional rights and pursue the quest for dignity and freedom;
- Help focus on improving the health system by putting a lot of emphasis on education, reduction of preventable causes of death and the lowering violent crime and accidents;
- Help contribute to address the Serious and Priority crimes and advocate for lowering of the number of cases awaiting trial; and
- Lend a hand to position South Africa, in our case through local government efforts, to become an effective powerful force in Africa (NEPAD initiatives) and the world.

It is important to note, Madame Speaker, that local government in South Africa in the past four years has been altered beyond recognition.

In Johannesburg, we have successfully merged five racially segregated municipal councils into an inclusive and coherent Metropolitan Municipal Council. This new Council serves all of the City's 3.2 million residents.

Even our sceptics and our detractors agree that the transformation process in this Municipality is firmly on the agenda. They accept somewhat grudgingly that progress has been made. There are visible changes: in the way our staff

is composed, especially in the way it takes into account factors such as gender, race, and disability; in the way we deliver services through the UACs (utilities, agencies and corporatised entities) as fenced off business units and, finally, this is reflected in the establishment of 11 administrative regions that have brought government closer to all the people. This says much about the road travelled and a lot of ground covered.

In 1999 the City obtained its first credit rating from Fitch, and an investment grading of BBB+. In 2003 this was upgraded to A-, which was reaffirmed in 2004. The rating upgrade was due to, among other things, the strengthening of the City's financial position, its increased capital spending, good governance, the ongoing clean audit project and a strong political leadership collective.

It is important to note that at the end of June 2003, the City closed its books with a positive cash position of R350-million.

Madame Speaker, urban renewal has remained an important part of our agenda.

The turnaround in the inner city of Johannesburg is indeed happening and the results speak for themselves:

- Attendance at cultural and entertainment venues is up and continues to increase;
- Building plan approvals are up 500% (2003);
- Vacancy rates for the city centre are down to 23,7% (2003);
- The Braamfontein node vacancy rate went down from 12,6% to 10,9% in the third quarter in 2003;
- Business confidence is up with business expressing increased satisfaction with ongoing efforts to ensure higher levels of cleanliness and the advances being made in the fight against crime; and
- New investment into the city from the private sector – commercial and residential – is being committed to various projects in what some key observers describe as ‘the new gold rush’.

It is no exaggeration, Madame Speaker, to say that the city centre of Johannesburg can today be likened to a massive construction and development site.

The new construction in developments such as the Constitution Hill in Braamfontein, the completed Drill Hall in Joubert Park, the Health Precinct in Hillbrow, several Newtown Cultural Precinct developments and the Brickfields Housing Project, the Nelson Mandela Bridge, the SAPPI- City initiative and other upgrading projects in Braamfontein are visible and speak of the excitement that is engulfing the City.

In addition, an Urban Development Zone has been promulgated for the entire inner city, allowing private investors to reclaim from taxes any money spent on building or refurbishing properties in the inner city. This is now official government policy. We need to take this matter a step further by mobilising all the stakeholders and develop a detailed and targeted programme that takes this issue beyond the realm of mere ideas to the realities of urban renewal and regeneration. Let the property owners, the City and other stakeholders get down to business.

The ongoing upgrades in the City, through public and private resources, indicate an increase in business confidence.

These efforts are reinforced by:

- Inner City Task Force work that covers: environmental and multi-disciplinary clean up, addressing run-down areas, necessary legal processes and converting most of these by using the Better Buildings Programme; stepping up by-law enforcement, use of existing partnership with the South African Police Service (SAPS), South African National Defence Force (SANDF) and the Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department (JMPD) to intensify enforcement and policing;
- The numerous initiatives of the **City Improvement Districts (CID) / Upgrade Projects** that cover areas such as the Hillbrow Esselen Street Clinic and includes the ‘Ripple Pond Investments’ strategy, dealing with the task of regularisation of taxi ranks as well as the informal trading sites; and
- **Hawkers:** Our work on informal trading is informed by both the need to manage and regulate on the one hand and building capacity on the other. Initiatives undertaken range from the roll out of trading stands to training workshops on basic business management and stock taking to basic book keeping.

- Eight hundred (800) stands have been erected in the Joubert Park area of the inner city to facilitate informal trading and a further one thousand (1000) trading stands will be delivered in the inner city and Lenasia in the next six months.

Many of you will be happy to know that the multi-traders not only occupy all available trading spaces in the new Faraday Market but that business is thriving.

Madame Speaker, in this past year, we have intensified our efforts on: an environmental cleanup, by-law enforcement, getting the newly established Municipal Court to handle cases, and crime prevention programmes to be implemented. All these programmes are intended to send a signal to criminals, slumlords and other similar elements that we mean business. This is our business. We are getting down to business. Rejuvenation of the inner city is our collective concern. Let me warn all those who think that the gains made thus far can be reversed to think twice. Anyone who doubts our resolve to fight to the bitter end does so at his or her own peril.

The City is also developing the Kliptown area at the cost of R164-million, a commitment made that covers the 2005/2006 financial year. We are doing this project in partnership with the Gauteng Provincial Government. The work that the City is involved in ranges from the rehabilitation of the sewer system, establishment of open spaces and recreation areas, management of taxi facilities, development and upgrades of roads, rehabilitation of the Klipspruit River and the overall development and implementation of the service delivery strategy. This development will be formally launched in June 2005.

At the opening of Parliament in February 2001, President Mbeki announced a seven-year plan to redevelop Greater Alexandra Township. The estimated budget for the Alexandra Renewal Project (ARP) was put at R1,3-billion.

The Project is one of eight original nodes forming part of the government's Integrated Sustainable Urban Renewal Programme. This project is among the main vehicles through which government is implementing its objectives of sustainable development and poverty alleviation. The individual projects range from housing, engineering services, transport, economic development and social services.

Critical to the work that needs to be done is the de-densification of Alexandra from 350 000 people to 270 000 and the resettlement of families to well-located land. We need to intensify this work if we are to make a difference by the year 2007.

Delivery during the past three years on this project covered the following broad areas:

- Bulk water supply has been improved, including the building of a new reservoir;
- Bulk sanitation has been upgraded, including a new outfall sewer and improvements to the Bruma outfall sewer;
- Bulk electricity supply has been upgraded to reduce outages. Connections to 11 500 households have been completed;
- The upgrading of London Road is 60% complete and the London Road bridge has been widened;
- Refuse bins to 65 000 households have been delivered;
- 1 438 housing units were completed;
- Land parcels for 11 500 housing units secured;
- 1 918 families were relocated to new houses in Bramfischerville;

- Social and essential services infrastructure for relocated families were provided in Diepsloot;
- Forty percent upgrading of M2 hostel has been completed;
- Five new parks developed and equipped;
- East and West Bank cemeteries upgraded and equipped;
- Seven illegal scrap yards removed;
- Police station (SAPS) completed;
- Alexandra Transit Village of 527 units completed and operational;
- Wynberg City Improvement District (CID) approved;
- Putco land purchased;
- 18 schools refurbished;
- All clinics upgraded and 3 ambulances purchased; and
- Brown House for victims of violence completed and operational.

Madame Speaker, please allow me to announce that we have now employed a director to guide our work on the Alexandra Renewal Project. We give our commitment to do everything in our power to advance this work to the next level.

Madame Speaker, in April and June of the year 2004 the City of Johannesburg successfully issued two R1-billion municipal bonds, the first issuing of such bonds since 27 April 1994.

We intend issuing additional bonds in future, a move that the Minister of Finance, Trevor Manuel, hailed as “very exciting” developments in the capital market. Speaking during his National Treasury Budget Vote in Parliament in June 2004, he said: “These issues are expected to herald the creation of a much-needed municipal bond market.”

Madame Speaker, please allow me to make it known that the City is envisaging issuing its first Retail Bond in the near future and the first preference would be given to the citizens of Johannesburg. This retail bond will be offered in affordable amounts. Its focus will be on infrastructure development.

Madame Speaker, in our budget speech for the year 2004/2005 we indicated that the Johannesburg Roads Agency is continuing with the City’s programme to accelerate gravel road elimination. This work, we said, is taking place across the city: in Ivory Park and Diepsloot in the north, in

Alexandra Township as well as in Orange Farm in the south. In these areas, we indicated then, that nearly 70km of new roads would be completed by the end of this financial year. The main thrust of this programme is the greater Soweto initiative where 118km of roads were built in 2004. In total, we said then, that we had delivered enough kilometres of road to drive from Johannesburg to Tshwane and back, twice over!

Today I am happy to report that the construction of surfaced roads in Soweto in the last and current year has increased our delivery on this programme to 232km of roads. This, Madame Speaker, was achieved in part due to an additional allocation of funds from the municipal bond, which was raised by the City of Johannesburg in April 2004. The following townships are now devoid of gravel roads as we speak:

- *Orlando East* *Pimville Zone 1-7* *Diepkloof Zone 1-5*
- *Dube* *Dlamini* *Moroka*
- *Rockville* *Molapo* *Jabavu*
- *Senaoane* *Mofolo North* *Mofolo Central*
- *Mofolo South* *Orlando West* *Meadowlands Zones 1-10*

And the following will be fully tarred in the current financial year:

- *Chiawelo* *Chiawelo Ext* *Naledi*
- *Phiri* *Mapetla* *Tladi*
- *Jabulani* *Zondi* *Zola*
- *Emndeni* *Dobsonville* *Klipspruit*

In excess of 27% of the funds spent on gravel road upgrade was retained in the local community through the utilisation of local labour, local subcontractors and purchasing of construction material and fuel.

By the end of this financial year, the City shall have, through this programme, positively touched the life of every resident in Soweto. Madame Speaker, all indications are that through sheer hard work and determination, we are more than confident that the deadline for “*The Upgrade of all gravel roads to surfaced roads in Soweto by December 2005*” shall be met. It is worth noting that when we made this commitment, sceptics said that this was cheap election talk. They dismissed us for what they said was “presenting an unrealistic proposition”. The successful implementation of this programme to date has made these critics eat humble pie.

During the past year the City has provided in excess of 20 000 housing opportunities.

The City also provided security of tenure to more than 15 000 property owners through the issuing of title deeds.

Madame Speaker, the housing needs of our people will be addressed through the implementation of a Housing Master Plan. This is a tool that seeks to assist the City to manage housing delivery.

Some of the deliverables in the coming six months include the following:

- 10 000 serviced stands will be delivered in areas such as Vlakfontein, Finetown, Weilers Farm, Orange Farm, Tshepisong and Kaalfontein;
- About 2 300 houses that will be developed in Lehaye and the Golden Triangle, with 450 institutional and 550 RDP units being developed in Kliptown;
- A special project will be delivered to ensure proper fencing and the street names are provided in Vlakfontein Proper. This will form part of the City's programme to upgrade informal settlements; and

- Ten houses will be built by officials and councillors of the City through the Letsema programme. The beneficiaries of this project consist of people who are unable to build their own houses for a variety of reasons and include pensioners, the disabled and female single parents.

Some of the deliverables from July to December 2005:

- A further 10 000 serviced stands are to be delivered;
- 3 000 houses will be built in existing and new projects;
- Specific attention will be given to the refurbishment of council-owned flats;
- Ten houses will be built through the Letsema programme; and
- More than 7 000 title deeds will be issued during this period.

Madame Speaker, as we move into the future we will have to pay specific attention to the challenges that the City has to overcome in the delivery of housing, which includes but is not limited to the following: lack of affordable land, high capital requirements for provision of infrastructure, housing typologies, density, urban decay and the ageing infrastructure as well as the outdated spatial planning practices of the past.

Our Capital Works in the area of Social Development includes:

- An amount of R58-million expenditure on the White City library, Bosmont library, multipurpose centres in Tshepiso and Ivory Park North, the Chiawelo recreation centre and the Poortje HIV/AIDS centre; and
- An amount of R64-million from the Community Budget, which will include the Dlamini multipurpose centre, Senoane sports field upgrading and the Riverpark library.

The Human Development Strategy is now in place. This important document is now part of our broader Joburg 2030 Strategy. It extends our approach from mere economic development to issues of greater access to knowledge, skills, health and a cultivation of creative lives.

Madame Speaker, the Johannesburg Fresh Produce Market (JFPM) continues to play a vital role in the growth of the economy of the City of Johannesburg. On any given day this facility provides commodities to more than 30 000 big and small traders. They trade in fruit and vegetables, meat and related commodities. More than 12 000 farmers make use of this facility daily.

In 2004, the City undertook a capital-upgrading programme to elevate this facility to a world-class standard:

- An investment of R14-million was made to construct a state-of-the-art banana ripening facility, which complies with international food safety standards;
- R13-million was made available to upgrade the electrical infrastructure of the market;
- General repairs to the roofing and the ablution facilities were also completed in 2004;
- During 2005 both the fruit and potato halls will be expanded to meet the increase of fresh produce supply from farmers; and
- Over the next five years an amount of R49-million will be invested in a Value Adding Services Centre where fresh cut produce will be prepared and delivered to corporate retail chains.

Madame Speaker we are proud to announce that in November 2004 we successfully launched the first satellite Wholesale Market in Soweto. This facility, located at the old Putco Depot Grounds, has brought the market and economic activity closer to the majority of our citizens and to traders and it

now enables them to spend less money on transport. We intend to take this concept to other parts of the City. During 2005 we will explore possibilities of extending wholesale markets to Alexandra, Diepsloot, Orange Farm and Rabie Ridge.

The Johannesburg Fresh Produce Market will complete and launch a Foodbank in 2005. The main objective of the Foodbank is to supply fresh produce and related products to AIDS orphans.

A business incubation programme was implemented at the JFPM during 2004 and has seen the establishment of a female black-owned company that supplies fruit and vegetables to prisons and hospitals.

The Johannesburg City Parks continues to tackle the disparities in open spaces development with added momentum and urgency.

An amount of R16-million was spent in 2004 on 37 projects. This includes the following:

- Eight (8) new park developments, 17 park upgrading programmes, 8 cemetery improvements and 4 conservation upgradings;

- Urban greening also benefited with the planting of over 2 118 trees along main arterials and secondary routes in July and December 2004; and
- The reintroduction of big game including zebras, hartebeest, blesbok and dassies into some of our nature reserves has demonstrated the City's commitment to conservation.

In 2005 City Parks intends improving delivery even further. About 47 projects totalling over R60-million will be undertaken. These include:

- Two new cemeteries that will meet the burial needs for the next two decades; and
- The design and consultation phase on a memorial in tribute to fallen struggle heroes is underway.

Madame Speaker, when last were you and our distinguished guests at the Johannesburg Zoo? The Johannesburg Zoo continues to explore ways of improving its impact on the City. This is a rare and valued facility located in an urban setting. It is well worth the money that we have invested in this facility. The progress that is being made covers the following:

- Visitor numbers rose by 17% compared to the same period in 2003;
- Water consumption at the Zoo has been reduced through the use of boreholes and recycled water;
- The Zoo perimeter wall has been completed;
- The ape house extensions were opened on 24 September 2004; and
- Numerous education projects are underway.

Animal acquisitions include gorilla, tamandua, armadillo, coati, capybaras, vultures and mona monkeys.

In the period post-June 2005, we intend engaging in the following programmes: create an entire Amazon and African jungle experience (partly in place); construct a natural science centre; facilitate a very hands on learning experience for learners; and run a focused campaign to increase visitor numbers even further.

Madame Speaker, Pikitup, the City's waste removal and management company, received the 2004 Commonwealth Association of Public Administration and Management (CAPAM) International Innovation Award for their 100 Spots project, whose origin can be traced back to the removal

of 100 identified dumping sites and the rehabilitation of these specific areas in Soweto. We were honoured to share the lessons of this experience with the world.

The delivery of 240-litre bins across the City of Johannesburg and the consistent war against waste and littering speak volumes not only about our commitment but the victories scored thus far. The need to redouble our efforts on this front is self-evident. Our tour of the City's streets, block-by-block, to see first hand what the actual experience is, still holds great promise.

On **Electrification** - An amount of R61,4-million was spent to electrify 29 024 homes by December 2004. A further 11 170 homes will be electrified by the end of 2005. These are in Alexandra, Golden Triangle, Vlakfontein, Lawley, Tshepisong, and Lehae.

On **Free Basic Electricity** – City Power has been delivering 50kwh of free basic electricity since 2 July 2002. The number of domestic customers receiving this service from City Power are about 190 000.

From the Eskom supplied areas an additional (to the figure above) 30 500 beneficiaries have been receiving this service from January 2004 at a cost of R4-million per month to the City.

Further negotiations to increase Eskom beneficiaries are underway. If concluded, an additional 53 000 domestic customers (beneficiaries), will receive this service not later than the beginning of March 2005.

On Public Lighting – A total of R10-million capex was spent during the last financial year and R30-million will be spent during the current financial year on new street light installations, refurbishment of old street light luminaries and refurbishment of high masts.

On Capital Expenditure – The capital budget for the year amounts to R469,6-million of which 87% is budgeted to be spent on the network.

On Billing and Revenue – Billing and revenue remain one of our focus areas. At a national level, the solution to this problem is part of what has become known as Project Consolidate. This is aimed at finding appropriate solution to billing challenges.

On query resolution, it is important to note that on 20 July 2004 outstanding queries in Johannesburg were 49 569. By 3 January 2005, 30 101 queries were resolved. This 39,3 % reduction is a result of the significant improvements of our operational business processes.

On the Revenue Gap Project, it is important to note that the project has so far yielded additional ongoing billing of approximately R13, 9-million per month or approximately R167-million per annum.

We will continue to ensure that those who work for Council have a clear understanding that the citizens and rate payers deserve to be treated with respect and dignity; that all problems presented to Council deserve special attention; and that the customer is never, ever wrong. Efforts aimed at ensuring data collection, correction of data and technical errors as well as engaging in re-engineering of processes and procedures will continue.

Madame Speaker, our quest to build safe and secure communities continue unabated. From November 2004, having launched Operation Token Days, we have had the following experience:

- Over 80 000 persons and vehicles searched;
- 2 000 buildings inspected, including fly-by-night crèches and dilapidated and overcrowded residential buildings;
- 7 000 people arrested for various offences such as contempt of court, robbery, assault and drinking and driving; and
- Over 300 000 citations for speeding were recorded.

The City is clearly sending out a message that the net is closing in on criminals and transgressors.

A joint project between the Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department (JMPD) and the Asset Forfeiture Unit (AFU) of the National Prosecution Authority will see more irresponsible drivers being isolated and targeted for civil action by the State.

Madame Speaker, each citizen should know that we will do everything in our power to withdraw drivers' licences and other permits in order to save lives and deny these transgressors the use of our roads.

In addition, during this year, the City will be introducing a more efficient manner of handling the 3-4 months waiting period for testing learners under the banner of **Operation Fundisa**.

The Integrated Information Management System (IIMS) has placed the JMPD on the cutting edge of the latest information management technology to deal with transgressors. Since December 2004, some 300 metro police officers are now able to remotely access real-time information on road users.

Over the last three years, we have been hard at work building the City's capability for search and rescue to persons in distress. This has been done through utilising skills honed from cordon and search operations conducted jointly with the SAPS. Together, the JMPD, Emergency Management Services and SAPS is frequently being called upon to play an important role in minimising the despair visited on families faced by loss of loved ones.

Our Canine (Dog) Unit which has been consistently receiving awards in South African national dog competitions and is increasingly playing a pivotal role in solving what would have been otherwise difficult cases such as murder and missing persons.

We have now established eleven (11) new JMPD satellite offices throughout the City. The JMPD has stepped up patrols and its visible policing programme between 18h00 and 06h00, thereby directly positioning itself to deal with important concerns of the citizens of the City expressed in the 2004 Customer Satisfaction Survey. Through this programme, we intend changing the perception that our City is not safe after dark.

Today, the job of a metro police officer is amongst the best sought after jobs, attracting thousands of applicants every year. It therefore goes without saying, that our metro police force is getting more diligent, disciplined and enjoys an ever-rising morale.

The spate of drownings during the festive season is cause for great concern. It is important for all of us, parents and communities, to understand and accept that safety is a collective responsibility. To succeed we need to work in partnership – both the government and communities. As the City of Johannesburg we intend to intensify education and awareness campaigns on fire, health and water safety. Funds have been allocated for a programme that will include the training of additional professional divers. In the near

future we will be giving special awards to those individuals, council teams and persons who have put their own lives in danger and gone beyond the call of duty to search for and locate missing persons and recover bodies. We are inspired by their good example.

In addition to the Florida Be Safe Centre that specialises in fire safety awareness, similar centres will be established in Dube, Jabulani, Alexandra and Berea by the end of this financial year.

Rapid response teams, to help address incidents of fires at informal settlements, will be established in areas such Alexandra, Kya Sands and George Goch, which have recorded high incidents this year.

Eight Primary Response Cars have been added to the ambulance fleet. These vehicles will be utilised by the SMART (Special Medical Advance Response Team). This will ensure that critical patients are afforded the highest quality of medical care within the targeted 12-minute response time.

Our rescue team – SORT (Special Operations Rescue Team) has proven to be world class, not only by the numerous high quality rescue missions that

have been carried out within Johannesburg and the neighbouring municipalities. We have shared our expertise and experience, via the national government, to countries as far as Algeria and Iran.

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A Customer Care Centre, including a fully-fledged call centre was created in the Johannesburg Water premises in July 2001. Since then, and on a consistent basis, more than 90% of the calls received directly or through the City of Johannesburg call centre have been answered within 30 seconds, this despite the take over of additional revenue functions in the recent months.

Madame Speaker, before the creation of Johannesburg Water, less than 150 samples/analyses were performed every month to monitor the quality of the drinking water distributed to Johannesburg residents. Since July 2001, around 500 monthly samples/analyses have been performed and bacteriological compliance is higher than 99% (South African National Standards require 95% compliance).

Johannesburg Water has improved its financial situation with more than 95% of the top customers' meters now read every month and through the improvement of payment levels of top customers from around 60% to more than 95%.

Costs have also been contained. In particular unaccounted-for-water has decreased from more than 40% to 35%.

Following the completion in mid 2003 of an external audit on the actual payment levels of the various services provided by the Revenue Management Unit on behalf of the utilities, a financial turnaround strategy was agreed by the City and for Johannesburg Water. This strategy includes the take over by Johannesburg Water of the core revenue management functions and additional 180 000 customers, representing around 30% revenue as well as the completion of Operation Gcin'amanzi by 2007, in order to decrease dramatically the high level of unaccounted-for-water in Soweto. This will ensure significant savings for all the people of Johannesburg.

This strategy already shows promising results, as the financial position of Johannesburg Water at the end of 2004 is better than projected in the financial turnaround strategy.

Furthermore, the Phiri prototype project of Operation Gcin'amanzi has been completed and the first phase of the project has been launched (more than 30 000 stands to be equipped with free-payment meters). The results of the prototype show that through the systematic repair of leaks inside individual properties, consumption has decreased from 55 to 11 kl/month/property.

Furthermore, more than 99% of the Phiri households requested the installation of free-payment meters on their properties. Operation Gcin'amanzi has recently received the Most Innovative Project Award from the City.

Operation Gcin'amanzi is also contributing substantially to the job creation initiatives developed in Soweto by the City through the high local resource participation content (38%) and an extensive training programme of more than 300 plumbers.

After four years of existence, Johannesburg Water has gone through a radical cultural change focusing on its key objectives of customer service improvement to Johannesburg residents, financial sustainability and development of its personnel. It is already recognised as the leading South African water utility by its peers.

Madame Speaker, there has been a marked improvement in the implementation of City's health strategy. With regards to HIV and AIDS the City of Johannesburg provides voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) at all of its 72 fixed health care facilities. Of these, 63 also provide rapid on-site HIV testing. We are on track to provide this service at all the City's 72 health care facilities by June 2005.

To date, the City has trained 178 community lay counsellors on HIV and AIDS education and counsellors who operate out of our clinics. Furthermore about 3 000 volunteers carried out a door-to-door campaign on World Aids Day in two successive years, in all of Johannesburg's 11 Regions.

The volunteers are trained on how to provide relevant information, counselling, HIV testing and on anti-retroviral treatment services. They also

work in a way so as to educate members of the community on adherence and completion of treatment especially for tuberculosis patients.

All of the City's health facilities provide treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) as part of prevention efforts to reduce new HIV infection.

In other areas the City waged a successful measles and polio campaign, in which we reached 95 % coverage for polio immunisation and 113% for measles immunisation.

In keeping with our by-law enforcement, in the area of environmental health, 8 925 statutory notices were served; 692 fines were issued in relation for contravention of legislation; and 491 schools, 342 hospitals and clinics were inspected to ensure that hygiene norms and standards were observed. In addition, all three government mortuaries have been regularly inspected and two hostels (Mzimhlophe Women's Hostel and Jabulani Hostel) have been cleaned. In addition, eight (8) hostels will be cleaned by both municipal workers and volunteers from the locality not later than March 2005.

The Customer Satisfaction Survey shows an overall rating of 83% satisfaction of people attending our clinics.

The Credo Mutwa cultural village located at the Oppenheimer Tower in Soweto is an under-utilised heritage and tourism site. It will be restored and the monumental sculptures and artwork that Credo made, which depict African culture and tradition, will be restored. The local community will be participants in this renewal effort.

February 2005 marks the 50th anniversary of the removal of the residents of Sophiatown by the apartheid government. This sad historical event will be commemorated in Sophiatown at the St Josephs Home on a date to be announced in February 2005.

Arts Alive 2005 will see the introduction of a development programme called 'the Road to Arts Alive'. This will involve the search for new, young local talent to be showcased at the main Arts Alive festival in September 2005.

MuseuMAfricA is undergoing major renovations to enable the production of a number of new exhibitions targeting learners and tourists. The new exhibitions, which will open in the latter part of the year and early 2006, will focus on the geology collection, the African Art collection and a special exhibition dealing with the history of sport.

The Department of Arts, Culture and Heritage Services initiated a partnership with a group of artists focusing on AIDS issues and creative solutions. This collaboration will grow in November 2005 with another Artists and AIDS Festival in Newtown.

Our Joburg carnival is part of the City's strategy to tap the energy of residents on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. The aim is to ensure legal compliance, promote the arts and have a good celebration. Participants on New Year's Eve 2004 included people who came from different administrative regions of Council, those who came from the inner city as well as artists.

The Department of Planning, Transport and Environment, received 18 872 building plan applications in the last 12 months with a total value of R6,3-billion. A total of 15 764 buildings plans were approved. The average turn around time to scrutinise building plans was 28 days. Approximately 34% of all buildings plans submitted were approved within 30 days. The Outdoor Advertising Unit received 453 outdoor advertising sign and cell mast applications during the last 12 months – of which 115 applications were approved. The turnaround time for these approvals was less than 14 days.

Over a thousand applications for land use change were promulgated and approximately 1 500 supplementary applications over and above the initial applications were approved as part of the post approval process. The turnaround time on calculation of engineering services contributions is still slow. The process generated approximately R80-million in (engineering services) contributions.

A total of 169 828 illegal signs and posters were removed during 2004.

A total of 3 817 complaints have been lodged with the Department and 3 454 has been dealt with i.e. 90%. Of these cases, 779 have been referred for

formal legal action and 453 court orders (58%) have been successfully obtained. The City has not lost one case during the past year.

Since February 2003, those members of the public who have access to the Internet were able to track the progress of their building plans. More than 3 000 enquiries per month are currently being registered.

The City of Johannesburg, in consultation with the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), needs to identify about three municipalities that are geographically located in the provinces that are largely rural and sign a twinning agreement meant to help build capacity and yield clear results. The lessons and experiences of such an agreement should be carefully recorded to benefit organised local government and individual municipalities.

Furthermore, this City has a responsibility to make a meaningful contribution in all SALGA processes. Organised local government should indeed become a strong voice for local government; a platform to share experiences amongst municipalities; help build capacity of individual member municipalities; become a knowledge centre that relates to and

benefits from the various institutions of higher learning as well as acting as an instrument of struggle to help to improve the quality of life of all our people. Madame Speaker, we remain committed to this view.

CONCLUSION

Madame Speaker, today we gather here once again to affirm a continuation of the culture of accountability, transparency and democracy. We meet here to say in a loud and clear voice: let all those who love freedom, equality, liberty and justice join us as we search and fight for a more humane society.

Let us stand by our people at all times, deepen service delivery, intervene to promote economic development and advance democracy.

Today we commit ourselves to the building of an equitable society that is responsive to poverty and the numerous ills that afflict our society. The dignity of millions of South Africans depends on such a commitment. This Council should blaze the trail and lead the way.

Thank you.