

Media address by the Executive Mayor, Councillor Dikeledi Tsotetsi, on the findings of investigations instituted against corruption in the Municipality on Thursday, 21 February 2008.

First of all let me take the opportunity to thank you for responding to our call for a media briefing. We have decided on this course of action because we value you as important partners in terms of deepening democracy and engaging our various stakeholders.

Through this media briefing we hope we will be able to curb wild speculation in the media through other sources masquerading as representatives of this municipality.

We remain committed to our strategic objectives which, among others, aim to provide basic services, achieve sustainable financial viability, ensure social and economic development, good governance and promote safe, secure and healthy environment.

In pursuance of the above broad objectives, the municipality also launched a programme dubbed "Operation Restore Dignity".

Operation Restore Dignity is a programme borne out of our realisation that the biggest harm inflicted on the majority of our people has been in the extent of dehumanisation as a result of several decades of apartheid. Not only did it dehumanise our people, both black and white, but it also stripped them of all dignity.

The programme entails the following objectives:

- That we will endeavour to boost staff morale to create a sense of belonging and that the municipality values their contribution to improving service delivery.
- To renew the readiness of the municipality in responding to the daily social needs of the community.
- Taking practical steps, currently at an advanced stage, to create jobs through the waste management project, the target group being young women and youth in general.
- The popularisation of the ward-based Integrated Development Plans as a means to create sustainable community participation and development.

- Reinstating investor confidence regarding their consideration of the region as an investment destination for creating new wealth and growing their businesses.

As if we had a privilege of foresight, the Premier, Mr. Mbhazima Shilowa, in his State of the Province Address on 18 February 2008 highlighted the importance of working together with the private sector.

He said and I quote "Together with the private sector we will continue to increase activity in highly productive and labour absorbing sectors of the economy so as to create increasing numbers of sustainable employment opportunities.

We will continue to strengthen our efforts to create an enabling environment for economic growth, amongst others, ensuring adequate skills and a safe environment.

Work continue unabated to ensure that more of our people, especially the poor and marginalised, women, youth and people with disabilities, become active participants in the economic activity through the development of SMME's and cooperatives".

We do also value the importance of partnership with business in helping us to achieve our service delivery targets relating the above mentioned objectives. I am pleased to announce that this partnership with business has borne positive results in our fight against corruption.

The genesis of this saga emanates from an aggressive implementation of a strict Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) regime. This system ensured that we have early warning indicators of blockages in service delivery. As pressure for accountability mounted among officials, a can of worms was recently opened.

Investigations were intensified in September 2007 after the Municipal Manager was approached by disgruntled service providers and officials within the Service Delivery Cluster with allegations of endemic corruption taking place in the cluster.

Through investigations that were conducted by Emfuleni Local Municipality and law enforcement agencies we have managed to unravel a sophisticated network of corrupt officials.

These investigations have led to suspensions and laying of criminal charges against four senior officials in the Service Delivery Cluster. This includes two senior technicians, a project coordinator and an administrative clerk. This is related to the ongoing investigations on corruption in the municipality.

These investigations have revealed some of the corrupt activities in the Project Management Unit and Metsi a Lekoa which hindered efficient and effective service delivery.

Corruption is not only counter-revolutionary but also counter-productive, and defeats the mandate of the ruling party; the African National Congress. As an ANC led-municipality we are committed to defeating this enemy with all our might.

The specific instances relating to these activities include among others, cable theft, tender irregularities, collusion with service providers and contractors, employees doubling up as service providers to the municipality, bribery, leaking of confidential tender information to preferred service providers, cheque theft.

Preliminary investigations have prompted the municipality to pursue criminal charges against other officials who have left the municipality either through resignations or dismissals but never faced any criminal charges for their wrongdoing.

The Municipality is continuing to collaborate with law enforcement agencies to carry out these investigations.

Our fight against corruption will gain further momentum with the establishment of the anti-corruption unit and a fully dedicated hotline.

I would like to appeal to all stakeholders in the region, our community and majority of our hard-working municipal workers, to come forward with any information that can assist in rooting out corruption within our ranks.

A call is also made against those who seek to corrupt our officials to desist from such conduct as it affects the pace of service delivery aimed at improving the quality of life of our people.

I want to reiterate that corruption is not only counter-revolutionary but also counter-productive, and defeats the mandate of the ruling party; the African National Congress.

As an ANC led-municipality we are committed to defeating this enemy with all our might ... and we will win.

Ke a leboha!!!