

**WELCOMING SPEECH BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF MANGAUNG
LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, HONOURABLE K. F. MORULE, ON THE
OCCASION OF LAUNCH OF OPERATION HLASELA
CAMPAIGN, 14 AUGUST 2009**

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Honourable Programme Director
Honourable of the Free State: Mr. E.S Magashule
MECs and Members of the Provincial Legislature
Executive Mayors and Mayors of Municipalities
Speakers of the Municipalities
Members of the Mayoral Committee
Leaders of all Political Parties
Provincial Government and Municipal Officials
Distinguished Guests
The Media
Fellow Citizens of Mangaung
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am humbled by the honour bestowed upon me to address this gathering. Surely this is a milestone event in the history of the *City on the Move* - Mangaung. Whilst on the one hand we remain committed to use the opportunity of hosting 2010 Soccer FIFA World Cup to leave a long lasting legacy benefiting the residents of Mangaung, we remain focused on the other hand towards realization of better life for all.

It is of great political significance to launch the *Motheo Operation Hlasela Campaign* during Women's Month. Let us therefore salute and join women of our country in commemoration of the August Month under the theme: *"Together Empowering Women for Development and Gender Equality"*. Women of this country deserve to be praised for their sterling contribution in dethroning the apartheid regime which was predominantly led by the white-male oligarchy. Let us not forget our local heroines of the

caliber of Mamoroke, Majwayi, Mamohlakoana and many others who fought selflessly in securing the freedom we enjoy today. *Malibongwe ingama la makhosikazi.*

As a point of departure, allow me to acknowledge an invaluable contribution of all partners who made this occasion a success. There is neither debate nor descending view on unequivocal political mandate of our government to promote the general welfare of the society. However, close collaboration between civil society and government institutions in pursuit of better life for all is inevitable.

In this regard, Ladies and Gentlemen, Martin Luther King, Jr. contended that **“human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals”**. I assure all of you gathering here today that your names shall be written in the history annals.

Honourable Programme Director:

Coming back to the thrust of this august event – revitalization of Batho Location, allow me to use a popular Sesotho aphorism that *‘mohale o tswa marweleng’* (that is, leaders are born from poverty stricken conditions) to explicate the character of Batho Location. Notwithstanding the formation of other political parties in Bloemfontein per se, it was in Batho Location at Maphikela House where the leadership of the African National Congress used to meet and deliberate on tactics and strategies to eradicate apartheid. The declaration of Maphikela House as a National Monument attests to this effect. Thus projecting the Mangaung Local Municipality as a political reservoir of our new democracy. If we consensually consider ourselves as a quarry from which many others are chipped, we are duty-bound to consolidate forces in protecting our rich heritage. I wholeheartedly believe that revamping old township(s) is a fundamental step taken in protecting such heritage.

Honourable Programme Director:

Allow me to invoke the words of President Jacob Zuma during the official opening of Pan African shopping centre in Alexander that “**slowly but surely, we are changing the face of the township in the country**”. Furthermore, there is no error in the resonance of this occasion as purported through Operation Hlasela Campaign by the provincial government in close collaboration with the new vision of Mangaung Local Municipality: “**...globally safe and attractive municipality to live, work and invest in**”.

About hundred and three years ago (103) Pixley ka Isaka Seme, one of the founders of the African National Congress, implored his generation not to compare Africa to Europe as he postulated that such “**comparison might bring humiliation upon Africa**”. Indeed one cannot compare Alexander Township to Sandton, Khayelisha to Bellville, Batho Location to Woodlands and so forth but it is our ideal to eradicate the current disparities as soon as possible.

Honourable Program Director:

I fully concur that achievement of common standards is impossible for now. I cannot contest this. For even science testifies that no two cells or atoms are identical. But my contention is that substantive equality as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa is possible and inescapable. In essence history will put condemnation upon us if we increasingly migrate to historically white suburbs and remain silent on the ruins and dilapidations of historically Black Townships. There will be no freedom and peace until the basic needs of all our people are met accordingly. Central to these needs is decent shelter, safety and security. In redressing the injustices of the past we are obliged to revamp our old townships. In this regard it is my view that the revitalization programme is ideal for these reasons:

- It is cost effective with regard to provision of housing needs. That is, there are no cost implications for land acquisition as well as on infrastructure. Primacy is on the improvement of existing structures;

- It plays a significant role in discouraging migration from old townships to informal settlements;
- Furthermore, the safety, comfort and security of our communities will be guaranteed;
- Crime prevalent in some neglected houses will be combated accordingly;
- Restoration of dignity of our people through provision of decent houses; and
- For posterity purposes.

This program augurs well for the sustainability of the Mangaung Local Municipality into the future. At this moment, Honourable Programme Director, I wish to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation for the initiative and bold enthusiastic leadership shown by the Honourable Premier: E.S Magashule on this robust campaign – **Operation Hlasela**. Giving this matter further substance, under **Batho Urban Renewal Programme**, we have already allocated an amount of R16,9 million in our appropriations for the financial year under review (2009/10).

As I conclude, I would like to put a challenge before all of you gathered here by borrowing John Maxwell's words of wisdom that "**everything rises and falls on leadership**". Therefore, the rise and fall of this country (province and municipality) is solely dependent on us as politicians, community leaders, academics, religious leaders and the civil society at large. Let us declare war against any form of decadency in our government institutions and forge unity towards effective and efficient implementation of Operation Hlasela.

Ladies and Gentlemen, mine was just simply to warmly welcome you on behalf of the Mangaung Local Municipality.

I thank you all!!!