



CITY OF JOHANNESBURG

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STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS DELIVERED BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF JOHANNESBURG, CLLR KABELO GWAMANDA

02 May 2024

Speaker of Council, Cllr. Margaret Arnolds;

Chief Whip of Council, Cllr. Zungu;

All Chairpersons of Section 79 Oversight Committees;

Fellow Councilors;

City Manager, Mr. Floyd Brink;

Leadership of the Parties in the Government of Local Unity Coalition;

Leaders of Political Parties represented in Council;

Religious and Business Leaders in our midst;

Leaders from various civil society organizations;

Members of the media;

Distinguished Guests;

Residents of the City of Johannesburg;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Sanibonani eJozi

‘BUILDING A STABLE AND RESILIENT CITY GOVERNMENT IN SERVICE OF THE PEOPLE’

Madame Speaker,

The social and economic pulse of South Africa is Johannesburg. It is a pulse that beats with a beat that resounds throughout its expansive terrain. From Soweto's socially rich and historically disadvantaged communities to Sandton's privileged residents and thriving commercial zones, the essence of this city vibrates across every nook and cranny alongside every pulse it produces within those who reside here.

However, beneath this tapestry of bustling streets and impressive high-rise buildings lies a profound reality – Johannesburg is not simply a city; it represents resilience and exemplifies the human potential to rise above obstacles and prosper through adversity.

In the midst of the busy urban life that surrounds us today, let us take a moment to reflect on our journey that has led us here. We should celebrate Johannesburg's accomplishments and victories while accepting any upcoming obstacles or challenges with grace. Despite impending uncertainty, one thing remains steadfast – the resolute character of both its people and community.

Let us welcome the spirit that defines our city and allow it to lead us as we create a resilient and stable city administration. Let us capitalize on opportunities presented before us while striving towards creating a more promising future for all who reside within this city. Here in Johannesburg is where aspirations come alive; our goal should be to make it an inclusive place where every ambitious individual can thrive. It is a place where many a dream have been realized.

It is indeed a place where everybody seems to understand what Martin Luther King Junior meant when he said:

“If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl; but whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward.”

Johannesburg, located in the heart of South Africa, is a tribute to the solid determination of its citizens to overcome challenges. Every day, we marvel at the resilience of this City.

Despite the city's turbulent past, marred by the remnants of apartheid segregation, it has undergone a remarkable transformation, becoming a beacon of strength and rejuvenation. Boasting a population of 6 million, Johannesburg exudes vitality, with its bustling streets teeming with the dynamic spirit of our communities.

The transformation of Johannesburg from a city divided by inequality and injustice to a symbol of hope is a tribute to the resilience and perseverance of our people.

Despite facing deep-rooted disparities, the people of Johannesburg have charted a course towards a fairer and more inclusive future.

By prioritizing reconciliation and social harmony, the city has established a framework for a multicultural community that embraces diversity as a unifying force.

As we mark 30 years of democracy, Johannesburg truly represents a story of our people and country. Through its diversity, its history, its present and its potential, our city weaves together the story of colonialism, struggle against oppression, victory over tyranny and the fundamental transformation of society.

Our city still bares testament to our historical injustices and inequalities, yet exemplifies in many respects the triumph of our people over discrimination and subjugation.

We are a City that still has evident signs of our painful past but equally, that has shining attributes of who we want to become. We are after all Johannesburg. We are the heartbeat of the nation.

We are a site of hope where the aspirations of all our people must be fulfilled and where the dignity of the historically oppressed African, Coloured and Indian people must be restored. It is here where the historical remnants of apartheid and white arrogance must be finally defeated.

Madame Speaker,

I dare say that Johannesburg is a resilient city because it is known for its ability to navigate through crisis and its capacity to adapt and succeed in the face of constant disruption. We are confronted with a constantly changing environment characterized by rapid urbanization, inward migration, economic exclusion and soaring inequality.

Moreover, the disruptions from natural disasters, crime and socio-economic challenges have emerged as daunting and at times unpredictable challenges.

Johannesburg is a prime illustration of urban advancement, with 89.8% of its inhabitants residing in formal residences. The city has made noteworthy progress in addressing housing scarcities and enhancing living standards for its residents.

The Johannesburg Social Housing Company (JOSHCO) is well on track towards passing the mark of having 10,000 units being rented by tenants in the coming financial year. Most of these will be in the social housing space, but the entity is also making strides to become a player in the student accommodation and the affordable rental spaces. JOSHCO's own strategic plan has identified a backlog of more than 300, 000 units in the social housing market in Johannesburg. This means that the Johannesburg property industry is ready for new players – there is great potential for private sector investment and growth.

Johannesburg's commitment to improving the quality of life for all its residents is further demonstrated by the provision of basic services.

Water is accessible to 98.3% of households; electricity is available to 94.1%; sanitation is provided to 93%; and refuse removal is extended to 90.5%; ensuring that every part of the city has the basic amenities required for a dignified existence.

Johannesburg's story is not without blemishes; it carries the wounds of its turbulent history and the challenges of its current circumstances. The path towards advancement and success is interrupted by ongoing obstacles that require recognition and solutions.

Johannesburg's challenges are rooted in the enduring remnants of apartheid, a system that institutionalized racism and segregation, leaving a lasting imprint on the city's landscape.

Despite the official dismantling of apartheid 30 years ago, its impact still echoes through Johannesburg's social structure, resulting in entrenched socioeconomic disparities and spatial inequalities.

Poverty is a prevalent issue in specific areas, causing a sense of hopelessness and scarcity in communities that are already struggling with limited prospects and resources.

Unemployment rates persistently remain elevated, especially among marginalized groups, intensifying the cycle of poverty and continuing to exclude the majority, which is black and female, from meaningful social and economic life.

Johannesburg is plagued by incidence of violent crime, jeopardizing the well-being and protection of its inhabitants. Despite efforts to enhance law enforcement and deter criminal activity, the city still confronts serious challenges of illegality.

Moreover, the rapid urbanization in Johannesburg has placed immense pressure on its infrastructure and service delivery, resulting in deficiencies and inefficiencies.

The increase of informal settlements serves as a daily reminder of the city's incomplete pursuit of inclusivity, fairness and spatial justice.

Despite these challenges, a glimmer of hope persists - a tenacious spirit that refuses to be subdued by hardship.

The people of Johannesburg, hailing from diverse backgrounds, have exhibited extraordinary resilience in the face of adversity, uniting to confront obstacles head-on and pave the way towards a resilient future.

With an unwavering dedication to progress, fairness, and transformation, Johannesburg is facing its dark history head-on. The city is taking bold steps, implementing inclusive policies, and rallying together to eradicate the shadows of its past and pave the way for a brighter future.

Through tireless efforts, Johannesburg is striving to create a new era of hope, prosperity and to equitably deliver services for all its residents.

Madam Speaker,

Allow me to reflect on our progress and the efforts of this administration in taking the City forward and ensuring a stable city government for all citizens. At all material times since we took office, we have believed as Dr Martin Luther King did that whatever we do, **we have to keep moving forward!**

Building Momentum: Johannesburg's Strides Towards Progress

The Government of Local Unity took charge in February 2023 to steer Johannesburg towards its goal of becoming a World Class African City as guided by our long-term Growth and Development Strategy – Joburg 2040.

Our vision for Johannesburg, which encompasses economic dynamism, social equity, and environmental stewardship, is outlined in our 2024/25 IDP review. This document serves as a guide to inspire collaborative efforts, ensuring that all stakeholders are actively involved in shaping the city's future. This is consistent with our priority to have an active and engaged citizenry.

The IDP review incorporates fresh objectives influenced by the Joburg 2040 vision, matching the changing requirements and ambitions of the city. By conducting thorough

yearly evaluations, promoting transparency, and involving the public, the IDP guarantees responsiveness and responsibility towards the desires of the residents.

The IDP centers around the idea of "**The People's Plan: Joburg - Our City: A place we call home,**" emphasizing the importance of resilience, shared ownership and accountability.

Through the IDP process we have given practical expression to one of our priorities to create an active and engaged citizenry.

Today, our active and engaged citizens are interested to hear what we have accomplished in governance, in the construction of infrastructure, as well as in the delivery of basic services.

CITY PERFORMANCE TO DATE

As we review the performance of our departments and entities in the past year, it's evident that our efforts have been focused and impactful. Across various priority areas, we have diligently worked towards achieving our goals, guided by the commitment to excellence and progress for Johannesburg.

In areas such as sustainable service delivery and infrastructure development, while progress has been significant, there's acknowledgement of areas needing improvement. This underscores the need for intensified efforts in ensuring we deliver basic services and improve our drive towards capital expenditure.

With a performance rating of 68% across all priorities, in the third quarter, we recognize the strides made and the areas needing attention. Through collaboration, innovation and unwavering dedication, we will continue our journey towards a City that is inclusive, sustainable and prosperous for all its residents.

The impact of our efforts must also be reflected in our ability to create a conducive environment for businesses to thrive and for small enterprises to grow within the Joburg Economy. It means our programmes must make a dent in the unemployment rate in our City and must create work opportunities to accommodate the growing number of youth who are neither in employment, education or training.

I am pleased that as committed in the last State of the City Address, we have now formally launched the Youth Directorate in the City and it has commenced with the important work of formalizing a strategy for Youth Development and Empowerment within the City.

We have placed great emphasis and focus in the area of skills development in general and in respect of the youth in particular. The City is assisting young people with programmes which direct them towards self-development and sustainable work opportunities.

Although still in its infant stages, the Youth Directorate has created the platform for the City to make a contribution towards decisive youth development interventions. To mention but a few, the City awarded three hundred and fifty (350) young people with bursaries as per the City's critical and scarce skills requirements at an amount of R14 million for the 2023/2024 academic years.

The City also appointed five hundred and ninety-four (594) interns in recognition of the need to create developmental opportunities for young people to get exposure and training in preparation for the world of work.

Asimanga, siyasebenza!

FINANICAL STABILITY

Above all, I take great pride in revealing that our city and all its entities have achieved an unqualified audit opinion. This underscores our unwavering commitment to transparency and prudent financial stewardship. It is a powerful affirmation of the effectiveness of our internal systems and the robustness of our control mechanisms given the permacrisis we inherited from the Multi-Party government.

Although we face budget constraints and resource limitations, our dedication to delivering quality services remains unwavering. We have placed the needs of our residents at the forefront of our efforts by tirelessly working towards improving their quality of life and providing equal access to essential services whilst prioritizing cost efficiency. A prominent achievement is that almost all informal settlements (97%) have now received basic services across all service delivery areas.

It is compulsory for all of us to recognize the importance of our individual contributions to the collective well-being of our City. Every rand paid towards municipal services is an investment in the future of Johannesburg – a future characterized by resilience, prosperity and boundless opportunity.

Fellow Councilors,

We cannot criticize and complain about services in the City and also be the first to default on our payments and acknowledgement of debt arrangements. We must pay and be exemplary in our commitment to pay for services.

The City has adopted an intensive revenue collection and enhancement initiative to assist us recoup revenue outstanding to the City, whilst assisting our ratepayers with queries and disputes. We have also taken a hardline against the scourge of illegality, where defaulting ratepayers illegally reconnect themselves despite our actions to recover monies owed to the City.

The City has rebased its budget as a prudent response to a strained revenue base and as a responsible action to ensure we deliver on our commitments whilst maintaining stringent fiscal discipline and governance. We are pleased to assure residents that their City remains financially stable and is committed to delivering on its mandate and promises.

KEY SERVICE DELIVERY INITIATIVES

Our efforts center around sustainability, and we have achieved noteworthy progress in improving access to basic services in informal settlements, efficiently managing waste, and advancing infrastructure development. Our initiatives targeting housing, electricity, water and sanitation, as well as overall environmental health have produced tangible outcomes that positively impact countless households within our city.

Enhancing connectivity, mobility, and urban resilience is at the core of our development agenda. We have made progress in achieving this goal through astute capital planning and careful financial management by prioritizing important capital projects. Though certain objectives may have faced setbacks along the way, our unwavering dedication to

infrastructure development persists.

Ensuring access to clean water and dependable electricity is a basic entitlement. We have accomplished noteworthy progress in enhancing accessibility of these vital services, especially among marginalized communities. Our investments towards augmenting water and electricity infrastructure are establishing the basis for durable advancement and financial prosperity.

Madam Speaker,

We acknowledge the water challenges that we have recently faced. As a City, we are faced with a rapid rise in water demand that is threatening the sustainability of our water supply and straining the capacity of our systems. Our water use per capita far exceeds that which is the standard in developed and thriving cities of the world. There is an urgent need to control and manage demand in order to ensure we create reliability and sustainability in our supply environment.

Besides pioneering initiatives, we must assess the impact of these demands in terms of carrying capacity and the necessary diversification of local water supply. We also continue to invest in the City's water infrastructure to improve reliability and efficiency of supply to our residents.

To this end, we recently approved our Water Security Strategy which is now an official City document. It is intended to guide Johannesburg's transition into a water-secure and water-sensitive municipality. It received endorsement from the Mayoral Committee and subsequent approval from this Council on 31 October 2023.

The Water Security Strategy is geared towards addressing threats to the City's urban water cycle while also capitalizing on opportunities to transform Johannesburg into a sustainable, resilient, and adaptive city. With seven strategic responses and 67 action plans developed for both short and long-term implementation, the strategy aims to ensure sustainable water management and future water security.

Importantly and most urgently, we must arrest the soaring levels of non-revenue water within the City. This is an urgent matter and requires an immediate intervention and we are

pleased that our recent engagements with the Minister of Water and Sanitation have provided a solid commitment for partnership in investment into the water infrastructure of Johannesburg. Once again, we must be reminded that we all have a responsibility to report water leaks in the streets and urgently fix those within our yards.

Johannesburg Water has a publicized backlog of R27 billion in infrastructure investment required to fully cater for the demands of the City. Despite limited resources available, the City has several notable projects currently in implementation and whose completion will provide meaningful relief to residents in the City. I am most excited that the Brixton and Crosby bulk infrastructure projects which have a combined investment value of R512 million are progressing well and will help us resolve the challenges of the Commando water system.

Madame Speaker,

For too long, our city has been struggling with the endemic load shedding that has plagued South Africans. However, I am pleased to declare that we are taking firm measures to confront this obstacle directly. We recognize that we cannot tackle this crisis alone. It is for this reason that we have established partnerships with the Gauteng provincial government and Eskom to address it collectively.

We note and appreciate that the increased focus on planned maintenance at Eskom has allowed us to enjoy a temporary reprieve from load shedding over the last month, with predicted record low stages of load shedding for the coming winter months.

Our entity, City Power, is also taking strides to strengthen our energy capacity. Through our partnership with the Gauteng government and Premier Panyaza Lesufi in particular, the John Ware substation's open gas turbine has been brought back into operation, enabling the infusion of a noteworthy 50 megawatts into our network. This progression marks only the initial phase in our determination towards implementing innovative energy solutions and decreasing dependence on Eskom for uninterrupted electricity supply.

In the next financial year, we intend to add another 50 megawatts of power to our grid by bringing back online the Durban Street Substation. We have also planned for an additional

100 megawatts by the financial year's end. Our dedication towards avoiding load shedding reflects in these actions aimed at protecting our citizens from discomfort and distress.

Collaboratively, we are working on innovative measures to reduce power outages like the implementation of load limiters and commissioning open-cycle gas turbines. Our consistent dedication towards progress combined with these interventions will guarantee a dependable energy supply for every citizen residing in Johannesburg.

Over the last year and in line with our commitment to make our communities safer, we have extended new high mast lighting systems in our townships and informal settlements to improve the safety and security of residents during the evenings and at times of load shedding. Our high mast lights are powered by Solar, giving them the ability to function outside of direct power supply from Eskom and City Power.

Madame Speaker,

Several transport master plans were completed in the last year and these will serve as a guide for mid to long-term transport planning, project development and investment for the economic and social needs of Johannesburg. Our commitment is to provide integrated transport solutions for the benefit of residents and solutions which allow us to bridge the apartheid spatial configuration of our City by providing the majority of our residents with safe and reliable transport options and decent infrastructure.

The completed Master Plans cover Region G, which includes Protea South, Eldorado Park, Lenasia, Ennerdale, Orange Farm, Zacharia Park and surrounds.

The Roodepoort CBD Transport Master Plan has also been completed and that plan covers the western edge of our City and provides a western link to the Johannesburg CBD for areas such as Kagiso, Krugersdorp, Soweto, Braamfischerville etc.

These areas have experienced significant economic and infrastructure decline over the years due to inadequate transport infrastructure, the results of which have led to heavy traffic congestion and urban decay.

In the same breadth, the Johannesburg Roads Agency, continues to maintain and to deliver new roads for the benefit of residents in the City. Over the last year, we have rolled out approximately 58 kilometers of new tarred roads in the City and have graded some 435 kilometers of gravel roads.

Whilst we are pleased that we have repaired in excess 47, 000 potholes through-out the city, we remain concerned with the speed at which we repair potholes once they have been reported and the quality of our repairs in some instances.

Personally, I have heard the impassioned pleas from our residents for a seamless action plan to reinstate pavements and roads where Johannesburg Water has conducted repairs.

Residents have complained that our excavations remain without reinstatement for months after repairs have been finalized. This is a matter we are looking into seriously and are considering various options to make the City safe and to close the gaps on reinstatements between Johannesburg Water and the JRA.

I have directed MMC Kunene and MMC Sekwaila to attend to this matter urgently.

In this regard, we are also hopeful that the Asphalt plant which we have recommissioned in August 2023 will provide us the necessary asphalt to repair and maintain our roads speedily and without hindrance.

The plant has the capacity of 1, 520 tonnes of asphalt a day. This is enough asphalt to resurface 2,5 kilometers of tar a day.

Fellow Councillors,

We have also adopted a collaborative approach with several private entities, communities and associations with regards to the management and upkeep of our open spaces. This includes initiatives aimed at maintaining our parks and bringing much needed economic activity in those areas that have distinct potential.

We recently witnessed the opening of the famous Sakhumzi Restaurant at Zoo Lake and are hopeful that many similar initiatives will spring up and allow us to resuscitate the vibrancy of

our City. This collaborative approach will ensure that our open spaces remain clean and safe at all times.

CRIME AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Madam Speaker,

The City of Johannesburg is facing a severe social and economic threat with the rise in illegal mining activities, posing an immediate threat to our infrastructure and public safety.

Illegal mining involves tunneling under roadways, excavating bridge embankments while also infringing on crucial water and sewage networks that is placing a real risk and threat to residents and infrastructure in the city.

The consequences of engaging in this unlawful behavior are significant and extend over a wide area. The destruction has impacted the water and road systems, particularly in Johannesburg's central, south, and west regions. The pollution of rivers as well as potential cross-contamination present severe health risks to local residents who depend on pure drinking water for their wellbeing.

In addition, the unlawful activities of **Zama Zamas** involve disruptive excavation which in turn leads to soil erosion around pipelines. This accelerates the possibility of sinkholes and severely undermines both our infrastructure's stability and the safety standards for repair teams.

The Johannesburg Roads Agency (JRA) is taking steps to reduce risks associated with illegal mining. They are continuously monitoring areas where significant damage has occurred to bridge embankments and road reserves due to this activity, using cautionary measures such as barricades and road closures in an attempt to safeguard the public's safety while avoiding further infrastructure degradation.

The city's financial situation is deeply affected by illegal mining, in a complex and significant manner.

Though an exact total for the expenses associated with this issue has yet to be calculated on a municipal level, it encompasses various costs such as the repairs necessitated by damage to water or sewage systems, replacing entire pipes that have been damaged beyond repair and restoring terrain ravaged through quarrying activities.

Through the Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department (JMPD) and working with the South African Police Services (SAPS), we have actively sought to target and to apprehend those involved in illegal mining activities.

We have sought to create a sense of safety for the people of Riverlea and surrounding areas who have been forced to live in fear as armed groups of illegal miners engage in open gun battles in their backyards and streets. The illegality displayed is a direct affront and attempt to undermine the State.

To tackle this problem, effective collaboration among diverse stakeholders is needed. As the City we are leading discourse in this regard, drawing in the Province and National spheres of government.

We are also deeply concerned about crime and grime in the inner-City. This concern is evidenced by the investment we are making in creating a safe environment in the City through improved crime fighting initiatives. The newly re-launched Tactical Response Unit of the JMPD is making great strides in enforcing law and order in the inner city and in targeting violent crimes.

This capability has also been enhanced with the deployment of CCTV cameras in partnership with Vumacam to provide the City with access to over 5, 000 cameras in the City, enhancing the ability of the JMPD to detect and respond to crime.

The Tactical Response Unit has over the last year recovered a total of 570 vehicles, 87 illegal firearms and conducted 127 drug busts in the City. In a coordinated manner and with the deployment of intelligent tactics and systems, we are slowly making inroads in our fight against crime in the City.

Making Johannesburg safe is important for the local economy and for the wellbeing of residents and businesses in our City. Our crime fighting efforts are also complimented by the

deployment of traffic wardens to manage traffic in peak period during power disruptions and infrastructure failures.

I must, however, add that the violence that plagues the communities of Westbury and Eldorado Park, as gang wars continue unabated, gives me, as the Mayor of Johannesburg sleepless nights. The brazenness with which gangs target and murder community activists and innocent residents is a worrying and horrifying reality.

The intensification of gang wars linked to the scourge of drugs in our communities requires that we take bold steps to silence the guns, flush out drug dens and supply networks and enforce the strict and strong arm of the law within our communities.

I have engaged with the MMC for Public Safety and I expect a plan soon that will inform the interventions we must make in those areas as law enforcement and later as Social Development and other departments in the City.

DISASTERS AND DISRUPTIONS

Madame Speaker,

Our City's resilience has over the last year been tested by a variety of incidents that have required of us to provide certainty in leadership and efficiency in our actions to respond effectively to disruption.

The Usindiso Building fire is the foremost disaster to have affected the City of Johannesburg since its establishment. Never before has the City witnessed such a tragic and painful episode. What compounded the pain was the fact that the disaster happened not too long after a fire claimed the lives of two children at the Florence Nightingale Building in June 2023.

On the fateful morning of 31 August 2023, 76 people perished in a deadly blaze that has come to epitomize the unsafe living conditions that our people in the inner-city and beyond endure in bad buildings. This fire was not the first but undoubtedly, it was the darkest cloud to ever hang over our City.

Addressing the Commission of Inquiry into the incident, I said the that:

“The deadly fire that occurred at Usindiso is a painful reminder of the inhumane conditions under which some residents of the City are forced to endure whilst in search for opportunity and a livelihood in our City. The conditions that existed at Usindiso continue to persist in many other buildings through-out the City to date.”

“The City has a real and scary risk of another building suffering the same or similar incident leading to the loss of lives and property of those residing in the buildings. These buildings exist, they are uninhabitable and pose a grave safety risk to the illegal occupants.”

Madame Speaker,

As the City we have since the Usindiso Building Fire, adopted a legal strategy that has provided us recourse to evacuate people from bad buildings on the basis of safety concerns as opposed evicting them based on illegal occupation. This has been deliberately designed to assist us prevent another Usindiso Building type fire incident.

As the City we appreciate that there is opportunity and potential in seeking meaningful partnerships wherein we may invite private sector investment into the City’s property portfolio with an intention to repurpose and rehabilitate buildings within the inner-City and across all our regions.

Such a process must fully align with our precinct development plans and must respond to the transformation objectives of the City. This means, we intend to prioritize investment attraction into student accommodation, social housing and affordable rental stock particularly for the inner-City.

Our focus will be to cater for the diverse needs of the various groups and social strata, mostly African and female, that reside and seek out opportunity in the city of Johannesburg. Through these initiatives, we will seek to expand our revenue base whilst promoting the transformation of the property sector.

This is a reversal of the racialized and covert manner in which properties of the City were utilized previously to benefit a minority, predominantly white and male.

This should be the legacy we create out of the tragedy that befell the City with the Usindiso Building Fire.

Again, on behalf of the City and its residents, I extend our sincere condolences to the families of those that passed on in the Usindiso Building fire and express our commitment to do all within our power to prevent another similar incident.

Secondly, the Lillian Ngoyi Street explosion was another disruptive occurrence that expressively alerted us to the need to be agile, administratively organized and resilient as a City. The swiftness of our response to the explosion and the seamless coordination of various stakeholders once more confirmed that we have the skills, experience and resources in Johannesburg to keep our city moving forward.

In January this year, we commenced with work to restore Lillian Ngoyi Street and to implement an environmental upgrade in and around the area as part of our dedicated precinct plans. By December 2024, we will have completed work on Lillian Ngoyi Street.

We are grateful for the cooperation and collaboration that we have enjoyed with the Property Owners and Inner-City Partnership Forum on this initiative and the commitment to partner on other initiatives to improve the inner City.

At this juncture, let me take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank our officials in the City for their dedication and commitment to making our City a truly World Class African City. The professionalism displayed by our firemen, metro police officers, our health professionals, engineers and other support employees during the variety of disasters in the City has been nothing but commendable.

Equally, the many officials, cleaning staff, security personnel and general workers who work in the supporting functions of the City and those that diligently exercise their responsibilities to ensure we are the best we can be in service to our residents. I extend to them a great deal of gratitude and appreciation for their efforts and support.

CONCLUSION

Madame Speaker,

Scholars have defined resilience as “having the capacity to persist in the face of change and to continue to develop with ever changing environments.”

Ours is an ever-changing environment which is vulnerable to global, continental and national dynamics, climate change and economic uncertainties. Our own environment has a series of disruptors as mentioned above that pose an ever-present risk to our ability to provide reliable and sustainable services to our residents and communities.

However, it is our firm commitment and focus to ensure that we build an agile and resilient government that has the capacity to absorb systematic shocks and disruptions; and is capable of meeting the needs of the people even in the most depressed circumstances.

The City government we inherited nearly 18-months ago, in a state of permacrisis, is undoubtedly increasingly equipped and capable to deliver on Joburg’s needs and aspirations. We are confident in our abilities, plans and programmes to set Johannesburg on a path of recovery and restoration.

Our acknowledgment of challenges is not a concession to defeat but a clarion call to action. It is an affirmation that we, as stewards of Johannesburg, possess the resilience and determination to overcome hurdles and transform setbacks into stepping stones toward progress. The echoes of historical injustices, the complexities of urban dynamics, and the global challenges that knock on our doorstep are not insurmountable obstacles but opportunities for innovation, unity, and growth.

Together let us build a stable and resilient City government in service of the People!

I Thank you!