



METROPOLIS CONFERENCE 2018

Executive Mayor Address

Acknowledgements

Programme Director

Premier David Makhura

Councillor Parks Tau

Mayor Michael Muller (Mayor of Berlin and Acting President of Metropolis)

Esteemed guests

All protocol observed

It is a great honour to be invited to be part of the panel to open the Metropolis Conference 2018. This conference is being held within the Gauteng City Region of which my municipality, the City of Tshwane is part. The Gauteng City Region is the economic hub of South Africa; it is also an economic pulse of the continent and thus a magnet for migrants both within the country and the continent. High rates of migration to the Gauteng City Region has largely been driven by the search for economic opportunities – we represent hope.

Migration patterns and characteristics has transformed both Tshwane and the Gauteng City Region. It is safe to say we have become a cultural melting pot. Those three words have such a romantic ring to them – it makes us sound cosmopolitan, embracing and receptive to cultural experiences and a home for all.

Being the administrative capital, Tshwane certainly is that as we accommodate over 150 embassies and have numerous tertiary institutions that attracts students from all over.

However, the underbelly of this infusion of migrants is tension and resentment spawned by a sense of scarcity and deprivation. Poverty, inequality and unemployment are toxic ingredients for cities that are grappling with a high influx of migrants and fuel speculation and perceptions that migrants steal jobs and economic opportunities. Tshwane has not been passive in this regard.

When I assumed my role as the Executive Mayor of Tshwane in 2016, I inherited a sustainability think-tank known as the African Capital Cities Sustainability Forum. In essence it is an annual gathering of Mayors and senior technical officials from African Capital Cities and serves as a vehicle for thought leadership based on the premise that capital cities have a duty to lead by the example.

As a network of African capital cities, it aims to promote sustainability leadership as part of the solution to addressing the rapid rate of urbanization impacting all African cities. The sheer reality we are confronting is that by 2030 more than half of Africans will live in cities on the continent. The resultant pressures and inadequacies of services will lead to poor and worsening living conditions of large populations within cities.

A mere three months ago, I hosted the fourth installment of the forum and it is more evident than ever that this leadership role can only be fully assumed with intense and sustained exposure of best practice in urban management for environments that are heavily constrained. We have the opportunity to leapfrog from the learnings of our more advanced peers and implement solutions that have been successfully tried and tested elsewhere.

I was very humbled during the last forum whilst during our Mayors' roundtable, a closed session involving the delegations only, the issue of civil unrest bubbled to the surface. In the room was the personal assistant of the Mayor of Khartoum and the Mayor of South Juba – so essentially local government representation from both Sudan and South Sudan, simply unprecedented. It is well known that these two states are at loggerheads and the bottom line is that it is their cities and towns that are most impacted during such strife, firstly because it is a trigger for intensified urbanization and secondly, the impact the extreme damage to infrastructure has on the health and wellbeing of innocent civilians with vulnerable groups experiencing the brunt of this mayhem. In a noble gesture, these two representatives in full view of the rest of the Mayoral delegations shook hands and pledged peace and whilst the act was clearly symbolic, it really points to the role that cities are steadily assuming in an African context.

The same can be said for climate change. The traditional approach to the addressing climate change is for nation states to declare Nationally Determined Contributions and negotiate mechanisms to achieve these commitments through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. However since the Conference of the Parties held in Paris in 2015, cities across the world have stepped up to the challenge with tangible vigor. This global movement of cities led and supported are primarily by international local government organisations and associations such as the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group and ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability. It has become a force to be reckoned with as the voice of local government increasingly speaks in unison and demands full recognition at the international negotiating

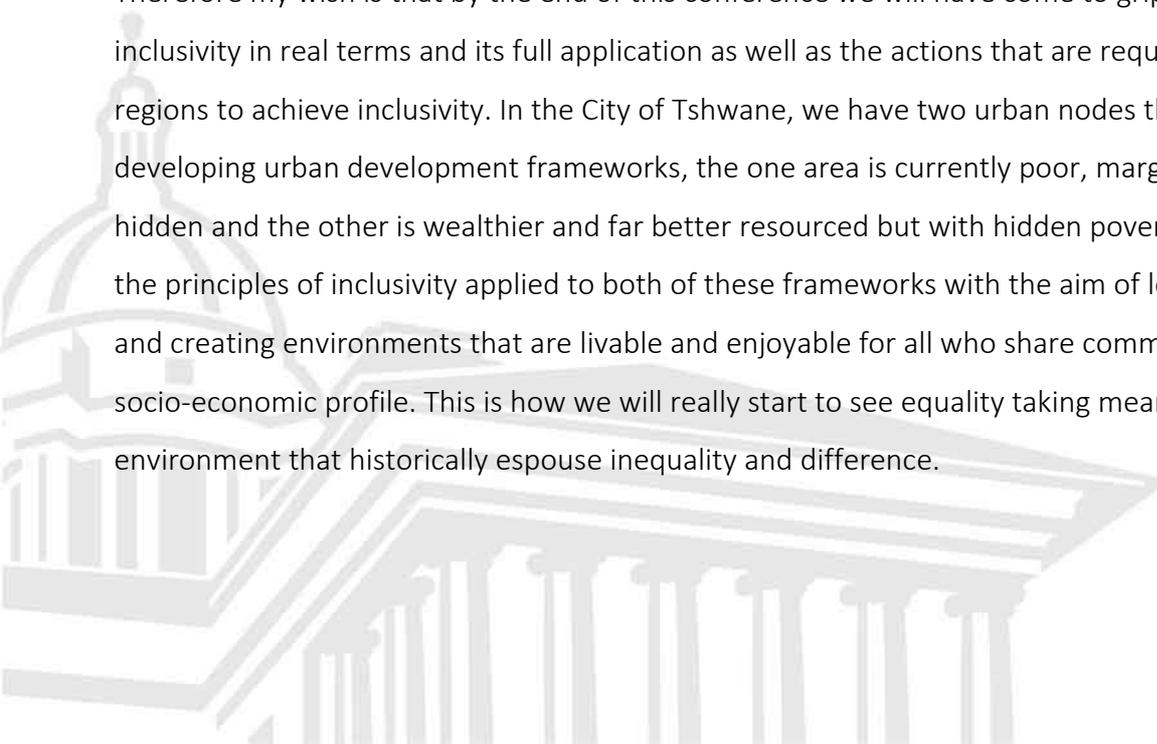
table, articulating and seeking relief from horrific climate impacts and rapid capacity building and technology transfer so that our service delivery models are informed by current, affordable and low carbon technologies. We also understand that we have a crucial role in bending the curve and reducing harmful greenhouse gas emissions.

No longer willing to be a spectator during these negotiations, political leadership at a local government level is gearing up to stand shoulder to shoulder with national leaders to ensure meaningful ambition in setting and attaining Nationally Determined Contributions. The forthcoming conference of the parties in December 2018 will be a testimony to that resolve.

The role of international local government associations in mentoring and nurturing cities to be responsive to complex urban management issues as well as forward thinking is a role which should never be understated or overlooked. There is no start or end to advocacy and capacity-building – these are functions that will never be saturated and there is always a need to ensure that local government leaders and structures are thinking ahead and practicing foresight.

This year Metropolis has created a platform for us to address the issue of inclusivity and that focus resonates with much of what I have said thus far. If we are unable to welcome and accommodate migrants allowing them to reach their full potential, we cannot claim to be inclusive. If we cannot provide urban environments that are safe for all residents with special thought to gender, age, disability and health, then we can also not profess to be inclusive. If we cannot dismantle Apartheid spatial planning and promote mixed land use, we cannot claim to be inclusive. If our policies and plans do not take informality on board whether it is housing, transport, trading, recycling to mention a few, then we also cannot claim to be inclusive. If our capital and operational expenditures do not target and prioritise areas that are classified as socially vulnerable, then we too cannot claim to be inclusive.

Therefore my wish is that by the end of this conference we will have come to grips with what is meant by inclusivity in real terms and its full application as well as the actions that are required by cities and city regions to achieve inclusivity. In the City of Tshwane, we have two urban nodes that are on the brink of developing urban development frameworks, the one area is currently poor, marginalized and mostly hidden and the other is wealthier and far better resourced but with hidden poverty. I would like to see the principles of inclusivity applied to both of these frameworks with the aim of levelling the playing field and creating environments that are livable and enjoyable for all who share common space irrespective of socio-economic profile. This is how we will really start to see equality taking meaningful shape in an environment that historically espouse inequality and difference.



Again, I thank you for inviting me to be part of the panel that is opening the Metropolis conference 2018 and I wish the organisers and delegates a most successful and productive process of engagement. The theme is on point and I know that I for one will have a lot to take back to my municipality.

