

MAYOR'S WELCOMING ADDRESS AT A STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION FOR UMZUMBE MUNICIPALITY THE FINANCIAL, HELD AT WILD COAST CASINO, ON 21 FEBRUARY 2013.

Honourable Speaker of Umzumbe Council,
Members of the Executive Committee,
Members of the Municipal Public Accounts Committee,
All councilors
Municipal Manager,
Heads of Departments,
All officials,
Our facilitators of the session,

I greet you all

On the 14th February 2012, the President of the Republic of South Africa, Mr. Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma, delivered the state of the Nation Address, wherein, he categorically reminded all of us of the promises we have made as government towards making the lives of our people better.

In his address the President, highlighted key priorities of government as a guide through which we as a local sphere of Government would be able to collectively analyze our own environment and develop plans that would seek to achieve the objectives as clearly articulated in the State of the Nation address.

As government across all spheres we share a common understanding of the challenges that are currently facing our people- and likewise our approach in addressing these challenges should find synergy.

Programme Director, the challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequity in our society are the basis through which our thinking should be centered as we undertake this planning session today. We need to remind ourselves of the vision of our country, as contained in the National Development Plan, which is our country's roadmap to a better life for all. In addition, the five key priorities of our government, which are: Education, Health, the Fight against crime, creating decent work as well as rural development and land reform, should set the basis through which our strategic objectives should emanate.

Furthermore, we should, as part of our planning today and tomorrow, ensure that we prioritize discussions around infrastructure development, as our means to improve the living conditions for our people.

Programme Director, this strategic session should further endeavor to develop plans to improve our economy in particular through tourism and agriculture, in line with our 2030 vision.

In addition, our deliberations for the two days should also as matter of importance, incorporate our strategic approach in the fight against diseases, in particular the fight against HIV and AIDS in our society.

Programme Director, I also want echo the same sentiments with the President when he said "Tourism is one of our job drivers in the country" - I therefore in contextualizing his words would like to see local tourism being our Job Driver for Umzumbe, and that should therefore encourage us to move fast with our tourism development plan, so as to see the benefits in the near future.

We also hope though this session we would be able to collectively deliberate on how to fine tune our policies to address the existing inequities and the uneven distribution of wealth.

I am grateful that today's meeting is a culmination of a series of departmental meetings wherein departmental issues and plans were dealt with at length. I commend the Municipal Manager for the approach her senior management has adopted in holding departmental build up sessions prior to today's session. I am confident that this approach has made our life even easier as we now understand fully each department's contribution to the vision of the municipality.

Programme Director, now that I have laid a foundation for our discussion for the two days; allow me to officially welcome everyone to this strategic planning session. I am confident that through your valuable inputs we will emerge good strategies and tactics which will ultimately form part of our Integrated Development Plan, which we will be our guide in delivering services to our people.

In our all discussions let us also take cognizance of our commitment to attain clean audit, and let us collectively strive towards putting in place measures to guide us towards this clean Audit. With those words I would like officially welcome all of you to our strategic planning session.

Thank you

It gives me great pleasure to officially open a gathering of this nature, where we plan and develop our programme of action for the year 2013/2014, which I believe will enable us to collectively come up with clear resolutions to empower our communities and further tackle issues of poverty, unemployment and inequality in our society.

Honourable Speaker,

We look back with pride on the financial year 2012/2013, whereas the municipality we have managed to make provision of service delivery in our community, regardless of the existing challenges of limited financial resources and the difficult economic climate country wide.

We are highly impressed; the year 2012/2013 has been indeed the year of hard work and dedication towards building a better life for all people of uMzumbe. This is evidenced by local economic development through Small and Medium Enterprise (SMMEs) development initiatives, Youth development programmes, such as bursaries and unemployed graduates' programme offered to young people as part of our plan to improve education and increase employment opportunities for our youth.

We have satisfactory done so guided by our Integrated Development plan (IDP), more so by all the legal pieces governing operations of local government.