

Chairperson of the Session

Distinguished Guests

Comrades and Colleagues

Ladies and gentlemen

Allow me to commence by borrowing words from the renowned writer, Ben Okri in his book entitled: ***A way of being free***, when he says:

"They tell me that nature is the survival of the fittest. And yet look how many wondrous gold and yellow fishes prosper amongst the silent stones of the ocean beds, while sharks eternally prowl the waters in their impossible dream of oceanic domination and while whales become extinct; look how many does and antelopes, ants and fleas, birds of aquamarine plumage, birds that have mastered Chinua Achebe's art of flying without perching, how many butterflies and iguanas thrive, while elephants turn into endangered species, and while even lions growl in their dwindling solitude... Nature and history are not just about the survival of the fittest, but also about the survival of the wisest, the most adaptive and the most aware"

Yes indeed, life is not about the survival of the fittest, but the wisest and the most adaptable. It is in that search of wisdom and revised wisdom that the human family is smarter than the rest. It is through the search of the unknown that every day we discover new possibilities, and realize more on our abilities and capabilities, and invent solutions to make life an even much better adventure and a cherishable opportunity.

One of the key distinguishing features of human adventure is that it is preceded by architectural conception. We dream, we live. It is that dream that, when conceptualized into a vision, informs our strategy, the state in which we envisage things to be.

This is a function of Leadership, a notion of life defined outside self. It is the realization that for the universe to be complete, we need a world where all humans live in harmony, regardless of class and race. It is investment of one's abilities to the steering of the dreams of many and inspire all to start to be architects of their own destinies. It is about injecting energy and commitment to one's fate and determination to defeat odds in pursuit of a better tomorrow.

We are gathered here today to formulate that dream, so we can sell it to the masses we represent in this Council. As we are about to commence the process of consultation with communities and stakeholders, we are tasked to also take that opportunity to sell that dream. We must analyse our weaknesses and strengths, opportunities

and threats in the context of available resources, be it human, financial and even mineral.

For all this to rise to fruition, planning must be done. Planning, in this context, must be planning to report. In most instances people miss the point by planning with no reporting in sight. This switches off the dashboard that would otherwise give early indication on instances of underperformance. The Reporting part is an active link between the planning and the actual fruition, consequent to implementation.

The strategic Plan will articulate those ideals which we envisage for the People of Nyandeni. We must dedicate every fibre of our energy to the realization of their dreams. We must serve them with commitment, with humility and accountability.

Ours is a Local Municipality still suffering from most social ills confronting our society today. We still have a high number of children who are not registered with the Home Affairs Department. Consequently, a high number of these has been rejected from school because they cannot access basic support offered to schools by the Basic Education Department. This spells a perpetuation of illiteracy in our area. This means that we need to strengthen the Inter-Governmental Relations in our space and invest energy in holding all local offices accountable for their work. Even on that space, we cannot fold arms and say that this is not our function. We must come up with programs to coordinate work to eradicate this backlog.

Linked to this is the continued under-performance by the Libode Mega District in the Matric results. There has to be a coordinated intervention in this regard by the three involved municipalities, id est, Nyandeni, Ingquza and Port St Johns. There is no future if we cannot provide this generation with education. We must get closer to this problem by making education a societal matter.

There are many families that go to bed without food. It is not just a question of poverty, but hunger. We cannot rest knowing that there are kids that go to school on empty stomachs. This does not form part of the South African Dream, a dream of a prosperous society.

Key amongst our challenges is the scourge of unemployment. We are below both provincial and national averages. The income per family is amongst the lowest in the region. There's dismal performance on the employment of both the skilled and semi-skilled in the area. All these, require the minds gathered here today to come up with solutions, fully mindful that explanations can no longer sustain our people. We need a committed cadreship characterized by self-restraint and self-denial. To be able to carry this load we need to strive to be strong in both flesh and spirit. We must pronounce ourselves and declare that we are soldiers of O R Tambo.

Our country today has lost many potential leaders at the hands of greed, pridefulness, boastfulness, crass materialism, recklessness,

sexual misdemeanour, and laziness. We must take this opportunity to warn ourselves against these sins towards society.

We must always know that people are watching us.

We have made a commitment both to ourselves and to the people that Local Economic Development will be one of our key focal areas.

We did this and received an applause inspired by the following observations:

- The majority of our people, both skilled and unskilled migrate to other areas to seek employment opportunities.
- There is absolutely no investment on land and property development.
- There are serious financial leakages owing to the fact that the large scale of trade is conducted by people from outside Nyandeni.
- There is no congruence between infrastructural and economic development.
- The state of our bulk infrastructure is below acceptable standards.
- We do not have facilities to house manufacturing, production and processing and thus seeing us having to import even the simplest of consumables.

- Our tourist destinations are not sufficiently marketed and developed, and further that there is not systematic tourist cosmos to complete the life of a tourist in the area.

We committed ourselves therefore to give a specific attention to these issues and invest human and financial resources to address these.

Further;

We observed that the development patterns between our towns are not at equilibrium. We observed that this has got the potential to compromise our unity as the people of Nyandeni. We further observed that this could open our space to mischievous holier-than-thee attitudes to plant suspicion amongst our people. To elaborate on the burden we have I shall digress briefly and say something about the process of German unification.

As the Honourable Leaders are aware, the two post-war German states united into one country in 1990.

After 45 years of division into two states with competing social systems, the German leaders and people understood that, truly to become one country and one people, they too, like ourselves, would have to address the central questions of national unity and reconciliation.

This was despite the fact that here we speak of a people who share the same language, colour and culture.

The seriousness with which the German people treated that process of the promotion of German national unity and reconciliation is reflected, among other things, by the extraordinary volume of resources which the richer, developed West Germany transferred to the poorer and relatively underdeveloped East.

During the first five years of unification after 1990, \$586,5 billion of public funds were transferred from West Germany to East Germany to underwrite Germany's project of national unity and reconciliation. This exceeded East Germany tax revenues for the same period by a factor of 4.5.1.

Further to illustrate the enormity of this effort, these transfers amount to 70 times the size of the national budget which this House is currently debating.

To help finance this extraordinary expenditure, a 7,5 per cent surcharge on individual income tax was imposed in 1991 and extended in 1995 for an unspecified period of time. Correctly and interestingly, this was designated a "solidarity" tax.

It might also be of interest to note that despite the huge flow of German public and private funds into the East, at the end of this first

five year period, per capita income in the East still amounted to 74 per cent of income in the Western part of the country.

To come back to our story;

To achieve unity of a people there has to be sacrifices by all. In most instances, those at a stronger position must show leadership. They must be prepared to sacrifice, to uplift the weaker.

We resolved to structure our development such that there is balanced ownership to all development across our towns. We resolved to build a community consensus to drive a shared vision of development, through convincing one another and demonstrate the commitment to this end.

We made the following observations in this regard:

- Land issues as affecting the development of the Ngqeleni Town, with most of the vacant plots owned by the National and Provincial Departments of Public Works.
- Poor state of infrastructure, including roads and sewerage system.
- Lawlessness on the part of traders by making illegal alterations in their buildings and erecting unapproved structures in the towns.
- Lack of sufficient law-enforcement capacity.

We are hailed as amongst the best on the construction of access roads in our rural communities. We are criticized for our alleged lack of vigour on the part of maintenance. This is one area we have to work through and find mechanisms to revise our internal capacity.

Our communities still lack sufficient social amenities. There is no access to services like banking, post services, police stations, and community halls.

In a free society, these are basic things that our people should access without effort. We must consider vigorously intervening in the building of community halls so that our people can have safer and more comfortable venues to undertake their activities in a dignified way. To this end we must spare no energy.

We must intensify our interventions in the assistance of farmers to compliment the work of the Agrarian Reform Department. In a nut shell, there must be specific programs aimed at changing lives in the rural areas.

Madam Speaker;

We are not doing sufficiently in the area of revenue enhancement. We lack in collection and we lack on enforcement of existing bye-laws. We must give a specific look at the capacity of the finance department on the collections section and make necessary interventions.

We must pay a specific look at the Law Enforcement and Traffic Sections. This is one area that is key for the revenue enhancement. We need to make a decisive intervention in that area because, unfortunately, we cannot postpone the work expected of these sections.

We must continue with our crusade of clean towns. We have performed encouragingly in this area. Members of the public are our witnesses. We must reinforce our capacity with EPWP to give opportunity to our youth.

Youth cooperatives must be supported so that we can create work for the youth. Amongst key areas to focus on will be the Renewable Energy. Just as is the case with the Park at Libode, we need more innovations to create green towns. Street Lights and Offices must be our soft targets in this regard.

Colleagues, these must be translated into programs. That is the duty of this session. We must revise them and build a solid rock upon which our actions for the forthcoming cycle shall be based.

In 1982, addressing our own situation, our respected national hero, Oliver Tambo, said:

"We have...striven for seven decades to build one, common nationhood, with one destiny. Our shared experience of collective sacrifices in the struggle for a common goal has knit us together as one solid block of liberation. The comradeship that we have formed in the trenches of freedom, transcending the barriers that the enemy sought to create, is a guarantee and a precondition for our victory. But we need still to build on this achievement. All of us - workers, peasants, students, priests, chiefs, traders, teachers, civil servants, poets, writers, men, women and youth, black and white - must take our common destiny in our own hands."

Today we reiterate those words we honour and great humility inspired by this great giant.

I thank you.