

**OPENING ADDRESS BY HER WORSHIP, THE  
EXECUTIVE MAYOR CLLR. EN MAKHABANE  
AT THE VICTOR KHANYE LM WOMEN'S  
SUMMIT HELD ON THE 22<sup>ND</sup> – 23<sup>RD</sup>  
NOVEMBER 2012**

*Programme Director,*

*Hon. Speaker of Council (Cllr. RK Segone),*

*Members of the Mayoral Committee,*

*Fellow Councillors,*

*Representatives from Political Formations*

*Representatives from Sector Departments*

*Representatives of NPO's & CBO's*

*Women Pastors*

*Municipal Manager and her team*

*Facilitators*

It is with great honour and privilege for me to stand before you to give an opening address to the VKLM Women Summit. With this event, as government we want to re-affirm our

commitment towards the improvement of the lives of the women.

The hosting of the summit has come at a time period where as a municipality we have recently come out of Strategic Lekgotla to map out Vision 2030 plans i.e. where we would want to see the municipality in 2030 in terms of growth and development. In mapping out Vision 2030, we must make sure that women economic empowerment programmes are incorporated into the said vision so as to liberate our women economically. We also need to align ourselves with the said vision and plans.

According to the current national census results, women are the majority in the population of South Africa. Within Victor Khanye Municipal area of jurisdiction women constitute about 51,2% of the population.

The same results also indicate that the unemployment rate is also prevalent in women which is at 47,4% compared to that of men which is at 25,2%. Organise yourselves into groups and form cooperatives to fight unemployment and poverty. The municipality's Local Economic Empowerment (LED) office was established to assist in this regard, make full use of it. The municipality has entered into partnership with the private sector and other spheres of government to alleviate poverty and also to create employment. The following are some of the projects in this regard:

*EPWP (Public Works)*

*Cooperatives Incentive Scheme (DTI)*

*Farming projects, construction of houses (EXXARO)*

*Self-help vegetable farming projects (Keaton Mine)*

HIV/AIDS is still a major social challenge facing our community especially women today. Our women and girls are being raped throughout the country. Women still complain that they open cases against the rapists, but in most cases, the rapists go free because of technicalities. There are many women out there who are carrying scars and had never received counselling from their ordeals. We need to re-visit our criminal justice system wherein rapists are being put behind bars for good.

Statistics of HIV/AIDS indicates a worrying prevalence of 25% (overall) for 2011-2012. We call upon our people to protect themselves when engaging in sexual relations however abstinence is still the best option of prevention.

Substance and alcohol abuse are also some of the major social challenges facing our community. We must as women expose those people who are selling drugs to our children so that they can be arrested. We must also make

sure that liquor vendors adhere to the legislation of not selling liquor to the under aged.

As we celebrate our freedom, we should acknowledge the fact that there is still a lot to be done to realise the full emancipation of women e.g. by making sure that our women are part of the role players in the mainstream of our economy. For this to be realised, I urge you to empower yourselves with education as it has been proven that education can unlock many locked doors. We would want to see our women occupying executive positions both at private and public sectors.

Pieces of legislation like the Employment Equity Act, Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment, etc are just a few of legislative requirements that employers (both government & private sector) must adhere to in order to address the imbalances of the past. As a municipality we

need to do some introspection ourselves in this regard.

The liberation of our rural women is at a snail's pace and most of them are still abused to this day where you find them working at vegetable fields and being paid next to nothing by their employers. Typical examples are the recent unrest by farm workers in the Western Cape. They cannot organise themselves to form labour movements (unions) because of fear of being victimised or even dismissed.

Most of them, if not all, are temporarily employed which means that they do not contribute to pension funds, no medical aid subsidies, etc.

They do not enjoy the protection that our labour legislations like the Labour Relations Act, Basic Conditions of Employment Act, etc, have to offer. These are the people who do not know what

freedom is. We need to engage the Department of Labour to make inspections with the said employers in this regard.

As we commence with the summit, it is my humble plea that we should vigorously engage all the documents that will form part of this event so that we can come up with a workable document with clear implementable resolutions. Our facilitators will have to play a meaningful role in this regard.

As I am closing, allow me to quote some words of wisdom from one of the philosophers of our time who mentioned some qualities of a woman of substance.

What are the qualities of a woman of substance?

“A woman of substance conducts herself with patience. Even when her life, job, friends,

children or husband drive her crazy, she knows that it is better to respond with patience than to react in anger. Because there is more to her life than just her friends or her job, she knows that she has hobbies and goals that she can look forward to beyond the present frustrating moments.

A woman of substance conducts her life with honesty and integrity. She is aware that it is better to get a fair promotion than a promotion gained from dishonesty or hurtfulness to a co-worker. She knows that life consists of more than money, so she would not have the desire to cheat on her taxes or keep an extra rand of change the cashier gave her at the grocery store.

Other character qualities a woman of substance should have include peacefulness, love, patience and steadfastness---to name a few. She possesses virtues that make others around her notice that she is not shallow."



With these words, I declare the summit officially opened.

I THANK YOU!!!