

Speech by Councilor Nonceba Molwele,

**Speech by Councilor Nonceba Molwele, Chairperson of
the COJ Infrastructure and Services Portfolio Committee
(representing the Executive Mayor of JHB) at the
occasion of the 21st AMEU Technical Convention at
Gallagher Estate**

The Speaker of the City Of JHB, Cllr Nkele Ntigane,
Members of the CoJ Mayoral Committee,
The City Manager of the CoJ, Mr. Mavela Dlamini,
The President of the AMEU, Mr. Vally Padayachee,
The Deputy and Vice Presidents of the AMEU,
Councillors and officials from other metros and
municipalities,
Distinguished guests
Ladies and gentleman.

At the outset I want to apologize on behalf of our Executive Mayor,
Cllr Amos Masondo who could not attend this morning. He was called
to an urgent meeting with the MEC for Local Government

I also want to take this opportunity of welcoming all delegates to the
beautiful and vibrant city of Johannesburg.

I also want to congratulate the AMEU in its ninety first (91st) year of
existence and for hosting its twenty first (21st) technical convention.

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Your longevity reflects an organization that is richly steeped in history with a tough and resilient record.

I am also very impressed by the theme for this convention namely **“electricity service delivery-the challenge”**

Service delivery in the electricity industry is indeed a huge challenge not only in South Africa but across the globe. I am therefore happy that this convention has chosen to confront this challenge head-on and at this specific stage of our country's and city's history. There can indeed never be a better time to deal with this challenge than right now and there are indeed no better people to deal with this matter than the ladies and gentleman in this room right now.

I am confident that you will rise to the challenge posed by rapid urban development and growing demands for services such as electricity and power. . We will be looking at the outcomes of this convention against what we in Johannesburg call the SIX MAYORAL PRIORITIES and also against our GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES .

Looking at your conference programme I have noted that you focus predominantly on the challenges we are encountering today and in the future. These include challenges like the integrity of infrastructure, tariff methodologies and Free Basic Electricity. These issues are central to the city's ability to reach the bjectives set in the growth and development strategy.

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I am convinced that we have assembled in this conference the skills, knowledge and the competencies that the country needs to get to where we want to go. The priorities that you have identified are also in line with our priorities in the country's largest and fastest growing urban environment.

Economic growth and Job creation

It is common knowledge that reliable electricity supply plays a key role with regards to economic growth and job creation.

I am confident that this convention will be dealing with such matters as for example, the future of prepayment meters, the development and enhancement of technical skills, the refurbishment of the network and security the adequacy of supply and industry restructuring.

It is important for an organization like the AMEU to play its rightful role in finding ways and means of improving, upgrading and technologically advancing our electricity supply systems. It is for this reason that we in Johannesburg are happy to host this convention because we believe that the outcome of your discussions will help us to improve our community and health facilities.

We cannot hope to improve the lives of our people and communities without a good and reliable supply of electricity. Electricity has enabled our people to start small businesses in their homes and in the business centers that the city is developing. The safety levels also

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improve as more and more streetlights are installed across the city of Johannesburg. We believe that we have built a solid foundation upon which we can continue to light up and improve the quality of the lives of our people and it is for this reason that we fully support your efforts and believe that the outcomes of your deliberations should be spread across South Africa and indeed across the African continent.

We in Johannesburg also believe that we will enjoy our improved services if our neighbours have access to similar services. Although we believe that this is important we also believe that a leadership position is our rightful position and that it is where we belong as a city and as the people of Johannesburg.

Housing and Services

As engineers you would have engaged in one of those debates where people argue about the difference between a house and a home. For a non-technical person like me the two have always been synonymous until I encountered people like yourselves who convinced me that not every house is a home and that a home is supposed to give more comfort than a house. I therefore concluded that if this is the case electricity and services like running water, the ablution system and refuse removal must be some of the major things that convert houses into homes. It is for this reason that I was happy when I saw that amongst some of the things you will be talking about in this convention are issues like Free Basic electricity and Tariffs for domestic customers.

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Cabinet has approved the implementation of the Extended Public Works Program purely to create a way that would allow our economy to open opportunities for unemployed people and to create empowerment opportunities for them. We know that the majority of people do not like the idea of standing in the streets and begging for assistance but would rather earn their livelihoods. The Extended Public Works Program will allow companies to create spaces for people who are looking for employment or business opportunities. I am therefore appealing to you that as you engage with matters of energy you should always keep in mind some of the challenges that may be seen to be outside your scope, but can have an impact on the entire economy including electricity supply.

The Creation of JORED or RED 4

Today Johannesburg is also looking at implementing what we have come to call JORED or RED 4 to ensure that we can take service delivery closer to the people. This, we believe will ensure that electricity supply is at a level where even the poor residents can access it much easier. The JORED will come into operation in Johannesburg within the next six months and is bound to change the entire concept of electricity delivery to our residents.

The Growth and Development Strategy

Johannesburg and the country as a whole is striving to decrease or close the gap between the first economy (“the haves”) and the second economy (“the have-nots”). We cannot allow this gap to

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widen. To address this perplexing problem the CoJ has inter alia implemented or planning to implement various programmes in line with the city's Growth and Development Strategy.

In this regard we have committed ourselves to electrify over 95% of all the formalized homes within the next five years and we are confident that we will achieve this objective. I trust that your discussions at this conference will focus on this important issue and support us in our efforts to reach these targets in advance of the deadlines we have set.

I am also hoping that this Convention will further deliberate such challenging issues as reduction of power outages, the betterment of public lighting, the reduction of non technical losses, the security and adequacy of power supply, alternative energy sources, and demand side management.

In closing I want to also take this opportunity of wishing you all the very best in your deliberations for the next three days and we trust that those of you that are visitors to our great city will thoroughly enjoy your stay here.

I thank you.