

**ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY HONOURABLE K. PHUKUNTSI ON BEING ELECTED SPEAKER OF  
THE DISTRICT COUNCIL OF LEJWELEPUTSWA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY,**

**MONDAY, 22 AUGUST 2016**

Honourable Councillors,

Members of the Public,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen

I wish to thank my Party, the ANC for bestowing upon me the responsibility to preside over the business of this Council. The position of Speaker is important in the business of the Council and the Municipality as a whole and as such requires one to possess particular leadership qualities and skill. I am therefore humbled and feel honoured by the confidence this council has in me. Certainly, through the support of Councillors and staff of the Municipality this office will be able to deliver on its mandate.

I must also thank all political parties and voters in our community who did not only take part in the elections but ensured that they were free and fair. Without mutual respect and cooperation among parties we would not be where we are unlike in other countries where the rigging of election and lawlessness is common. We should also thank men and women who were part of the IEC for their sterling work and dedication.

In terms of Section 36 of the Municipal Structures Act (117 of 1998) the Speaker is defined as a councillor elected from amongst council members to become the chairperson of a municipal council; and as a custodian of council's decisions and policies. The section further prescribes that the Speaker has to ensure that oversight, accountability, integrity, discipline and the efficient running of council meetings do to take place.

It is therefore my undertaking that the office of the Speaker in this new term will strive to improve its reputation of being independent and efficient as it serves all Councillors and other role players without favour or prejudice. In this regard, the role of oversight over the Executive will be strengthened by setting up appropriate committees and providing the necessary training to equip Councillors with the requisite skills and knowledge.

As we have always said that “The people shall govern”, the Speaker`s Office will ensure that community participation is not taken on an ad-hoc basis but becomes a feature of all municipal processes as prescribed by relevant legislation. Planning, Budgets and other related processes should be informed by inputs from the community and not the other way round. This is consistent with Section 4(2) of the Municipal Systems Act (2000) which states among others that a municipal council exercises both the executive and legislative authority and use resources of the municipality in the best interest of the community, and shall also encourage the involvement of the community in matters of local governance.

As prescribed by the Municipal Systems act of 2000, we will continue to strengthen and maintain dynamic cooperation with all the Local municipalities in our district. Our cooperation will improve our planning and provision of services to our communities. Our fight against inequality, poverty and unemployment can only succeed if we improve our joint planning forums and direct our resources to programmes that will better the lives of our communities.

Moreover, this office should also seek to reposition the district to play its role of helping to build capacity among local municipalities in our jurisdiction as provided by the Municipal Structures Act (1998). And this will be done among others through stakeholder forums which will provide a platform for benchmarking, information exchange and sharing of resources.

Finally, as an incumbent in the Office of the Speaker I am looking forward to a productive term of office in which service delivery will be a top priority in the Municipality. In this tough economic times we will have to tighten our belts and spend wisely. Let`s all join hands with all our local municipalities and other stakeholders to make Lejweleputswa a district of excellence.

Let us work together to advance peoples power in our community.