

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR,  
CLLR M MAPHETLE AT THE LAUNCH OF THE SAWIC  
ROAD SHOW**

**August 12, 2008**

Programme Director

All Protocol Observed

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is with great pride and humility that, I, on behalf of Tlokwe City Council and the people we serve, welcome you all to this launch of SAWIC Road Show. I wish at the outset to extend warm words of gratitude to the South African Women in Construction, for bestowing the honour of hosting the launch of the road show in our city.

I believe that during the road show members of SAWIC will have an opportunity to share and exchange notes with each other as well as with stakeholders. They will observe and share best practices and experiences on capacity building and also network in order to make their enterprises more successful. This will strengthen and extend their endeavours to build the necessary self-esteem, exposure and most importantly leadership skills that are required to position women as role players in growing our economy.

Programme Director, our city council, just as SAWIC, aligns itself and is committed to programmes that enhance our collective endeavours to build capacity and increase the level of skills development.

In South Africa, women (black women in particular) have a consciousness that constitutes our world dating back to some 500 years ago when in 1652 the seeds of racial and gender oppression were first planted on our shores. Thereafter women lived through an entire century through experiences where they were denied access to political power and had to endure systematic and often brutal forms of dispossession that were mostly meted out against us through the use of forced removals. Yet, despite harshly bearing these indelible scars through collective and individual efforts their spirit lived on.

Their consciousness enabled them to live and to continue to tell the tales of their harsh experiences. It enabled them to live so that in the twilight of their years and the agency of their beings they can construct alternatives to achieve a free, non-racial, non-sexist democratic country.

In a society that was severely split and damaged by apartheid the potency of their tales that have given them the consciousness I have described tell us how history is being made today with women involvement and participation. Nowhere is this more evident, for me, than in housing.

Indeed, apart from job reservation which denied black women training, upward mobility and apprenticeship, with the implementation of Bantu Education their disadvantages were spread further as the system of *apartheid* strengthened its hold from the 1960s onwards.

Because I believe that investments in construction are capable of sustaining a significant number of jobs directly it is critical that women collectively attend to this challenge. It is critical that they do so because construction programmes have too an important capacity to sustain jobs across the sector. Construction also has the potential to raise foreign currency that is crucial to supplement local savings.

I am hopeful that you will emerge from this road show strengthened and empowered to play a critical and progressive role in ensuring that our collective and national agenda to build a non racial, non sexist, united and prosperous South Africa, that truly belongs to all who live in it, united in diversity, is brought closer to realization to benefit the majority of our people, who aspire thereto.

The tale therefore that you should continue to tell as women since after the road show is that your collective consciousness will propel you to play an even bigger role in advancing and creating new possibilities for our people.

Having seen that despite all that has been done in the first decades of freedom that our people still continue to live under grinding poverty and that they remain surrounded by settlements that unsuitable for any human being to live in, I am certain that you will be sufficiently aroused to increase your efforts. We must be determinedly concerned to want to ensure that all our people experience the joy of living free and equal and that they ultimately find their dignity.

I congratulate all of you for the determination you have shown to enlist in this sector where women are not relatively known. You have indicated that collectively we can remove the disadvantages that *apartheid* spread in our way as women. I am happy that I am your partner in this. I would like to encourage you individually to carve a niche in the field you have chosen for yourselves. Excel. Advance our cause. Be the carrier of our collective consciousness!

Give your labor to give birth to a new society of hope; a society that spreads its advantages to all who live in it. Once we have done that, I am truly convinced, there will indeed be no mess to have to clean repeatedly throughout our history.

I thank you