

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE MAYOR OF LIM345 LOCAL MUNICIPALITY HER WORSHIP CLLR BILA TINTSWALO JOYCE DURING THE EVENT OF TOGETHER AS ONE MINISTRIES WOMEN CONFERENCE HELD ON THE 9<sup>TH</sup> OF AUGUST 2017 AT MALAMULELE STADIUM 09H00.**

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Acknowledgements

- **Executive Committee Members from Lim345 Municipality;**
- **Fellow Councillors present here;**
- **The main speaker, Prophet Maluleke HJ from the Miracles of God Church;**
- **Other Church Pastors, Reverends, Bishops, Deacons and many other titled church leaders;**
- **Ministers of Gospel and Gospel Artists Whom God has sent to us;**
- **Invited guests who have come to grace the occasion;**
- **Media houses in our midst;**
- **Distinguished guests;**
- **Moms;**
- **Ladies and gentlemen;**

It is indeed a great honour and privilege for me to be given this opportunity to join you this morning for an important event of Together as One Women Conference which is organised here in LIM345 Local Municipality. This session takes place during the time when our country is celebrating Women's Month.

Let me therefore start by acknowledging the organisers of this noble gathering, for putting together such an important initiative, during the month of commemorating the nation builders and pillars of our society.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is very critical for us to understand where we come from as a nation, in order for us to get a better grasp of where we are, how far we have come and where we are going. We need to understand the significance of our struggle for women empowerment, which is represented by this day, the 9<sup>th</sup> of August. This day marks the height of the struggle for women liberation and signifies the contribution made by women towards the fight for freedom and democracy – of course with the help of God.

I have been informed that the formation of this Women Conference was sparked by women leaders who faced marital challenges and other household tests. These women met in 1996 and implored for God's intervention because they knew that with Him – everything is possible.

What began as a small initiative has become more glorious and as a municipality we are proud to join you today. Our pleasure is coupled by the fact that this gathering is in line with what Albertina Sisulu, Caroline Motsoaledi, Annie Silinga, Lilian Ngoyi and many others fought for on 9 August 1956 – to alter South Africa and its households into a more democratic, non-violent and equal society.

We can all attest to the fact that women empowerment is very key in ensuring that communities are progressive and nations are transformed.

### **Programme Director,**

The empowerment of women in South Africa is about redressing the legacy of apartheid and colonialism. It's about the transformation of society, particularly the transformation of power relations between women, men, institutions and laws. It is about addressing gender oppression, sexism and structural oppression, and creating a conducive environment for women to make a difference in society.

Twenty-three years into democracy, we have made great strides to facilitate women emancipation. Women have taken leadership roles in business, community and family life. In some homes, women are breadwinners and single parents. We have women who play significant leadership roles in society, such as in community organisations, churches and government structures such as Municipal Councils.

**Fellow citizens,**

Other women play leadership roles in the business environment. They sit in boards of companies and provide critical directions in key industries which drive our economy. It is not only older and experienced women that make a difference. Young women artists, professionals and sports personalities have followed on the footsteps of their counterparts.

The dedication and bravery of some of our women leaders ensured that the men who were leaders in our struggle recognised that no victory can be achieved without full participation of women.

Today we need the agility and bravery that was displayed by these women who, despite the many socio-political challenges they faced, decided to take stand and corrected what was going wrong in society. It is this kind of bravery and dedication to a cause that I want to encourage you to emulate in our communities today.

**Programme Director,**

As a municipality, we strive to champion programmes of women and youth empowerment that are aimed at facilitating the integration of women into mainstream economy. These programmes are tailor-made to respond to the needs and challenges of youth and women empowerment – and this includes the identification of key challenges that women and youth are facing.

We need to coordinate numerous initiatives to empower women with knowledge and skills they need to bring about change. We must invest in women empowerment programmes and other business support development programmes.

Our municipal women empowerment programmes will include construction, information and communication technology and many other programmes that will provide training and mentorship, fashion development events where local and national experts will share a platform showcasing their exclusive collections and expertise.

I must also highlight as I conclude that I am welcoming you at a time when our municipality is only left with 8 days before the celebration of its first anniversary since it was established on the 17<sup>th</sup> of August 2016. We need the prayers of churches and of *Together as One Ministries* in order for us to realise many milestones and accomplish many objectives that seeks to advance the lives of our people – particularly the women.

We seek these prayers with the belief that what Paul said in **1 Timothy 2 verse 1 and 2** is your responsibility. He said and I quote:

*“First of all, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that **they** may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.”*

It is through your prayers that governments and institutions can embody God’s will. It is indeed through your prayers that leaders of nations can epitomise what God needs of his people and therefore, depict His image through good deeds to the world.

As I welcome you **Ladies and Gentlemen**, I am proud of the maturity and continued growth and resilience of this annual conference. As government we need to forge partnerships with you and other women formations to ensure economic and social transformation.

You are warmly welcomed to Lim345 Local Municipality, and may the grace of God be upon us all.

**I thank you!**