

Solly 'will work with Makhura'

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TSHWANE mayor Solly Msimanga has expressed his willingness to work with Premier David Makhura on condition he “means business about transforming the lives of the people in Gauteng”.

Msimanga reacted to Makhura’s State of the Province Address, delivered on Monday at the provincial legislature.

“While there were some things that we would’ve liked the premier to make pronouncements on, we are nevertheless committed to making the lives of the people of Tshwane better and that requires us to work together on some of the critical issues that we need to deal with if we are to make the capital and Gauteng work for the people,” he said.

He cited the issue of joblessness as being among the key challenges faced by South Africans.

“The City of Tshwane has begun this work by contracting over 6 000 residents to the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) in just three months under our Gata le Nna campaign,” he said.

The programme equipped people with skills to compete in the economy once their temporary contracts with the City were concluded, he said.

He challenged Makhura to do his part by stimulating the provincial economy “so that there are permanent jobs for our people to take advantage of”.

“While job creation was not the core function of a municipality, we do have a responsibility to cultivate viable city economies that are conducive to the attraction of investment and job creation,” Msimanga added.

He said he was disappointed that Makhura made no mention of the City’s economic zones.

In the same breath, he said he was optimistic that Makhura’s gesture didn’t signal his abandonment of the critical investment-creating component to jumpstart the economy.

He welcomed Makhura’s pro-

nouncement to support eKasiLabs Innovation Centres.

It included the one in Tshwane, the mayor said.

He believed that eKasi Labs initiative would bring about solutions to the plight of joblessness faced by the youth.

He pleaded with the province to assist the City to address the problem of student accommodation at many campuses of institutions of higher learning.

“These students are the future of Gauteng and we need to invest in them,” he said.

Msimanga expressed his disappointment about the omission of the refurbishment of HM Pitjie Stadium in Makhura’s speech.

He added that he would propose a meeting with the premier to discuss the project.

“The art of creating champions sometimes involves investment in projects that are often thought of as nice to haves. This is unfortunate because we have seen how sports can be a viable career option for youth in the townships and previously disadvantaged backgrounds. This is why I will seek the premier’s audience to finally get his commitment to the refurbishment of HM Pitje Stadium.”

Regarding Makhura’s commitment to formalise many township enterprises, he said: “This is something that we would greatly appreciate his assistance with, because many of our youth are products of the township and if we are to deal with the stimulation of the township economy, we need to formalise and legitimise township enterprise and make the informal economy formal and viable.”

He reiterated that the City was committed to “litigate ourselves out of unaffordable broadband contract that was signed by the previous administration”.

“This will allow us to provide a sustainable service to more people as the auditor-general found this contract to be unlawful from the very outset,” he said.