

SPEECH BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF THABO MOFUTSANYANA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY, DR B.E. MZANGWA, DURING THE 13TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF QWAQWA RADIO & EXPANSION TO COVER THE WHOLE OF THABO MOFUTSANYANA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

08 June 2013

Programme Director

The Chairperson of the Board of Qwaqwa Radio, Mr Mei Salemane

Board Members of the Qwaqwa Radio, Management and Staff

Distinguished guests

Listeners

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is indeed a great honour and privilege for me to be joining all of you today in celebrating yet another milestone in the existence of our most popular community radio stations, in our region and province – Qwaqwa Radio.

Celebration of yet one more anniversary, and up to the total of thirteen this year, is sweet music to our ears and a conviction that Qwaqwa Radio is here to stay. Of course, this would be more and more possible with the support of the community, businesses, non-governmental organisations, faith-based organisations and the government.

Programme Director, for the past few years our community has become attuned to a variety of radio programmes that talk to them in their own language and on issues relevant to them, while at the same time offering them an avalanche of entertainment, laughter

and relaxation. Qwaqwa Radio has grown up to be the voice of the voiceless, and a forum for dialogue between communities and their government at all levels – national, provincial and local.

Bomme le Bontate, re motlotlo haholo ka katleho e fihletsweng ke Qwaqwa Radio ka mananeo a yona le ho fa setjhaba monyetla wa tsebo ya diketsahalo sebakeng sa bona le dibakeng tse haufi, ekasitana le Foreistata hammoho le naha kaofela. Katleho ya Qwaqwa Radio hape re e bone ka ho ba seteishene se hlwahlwa ka ho kwetliseng dibuhi le baqolotsi ba ditaba, hoba kajeno ha re bua tjena, re tseba bohle hore dibuhudi le baqolotsi ba ditaba ba leng Lesedi FM ba tswang mona Qwaqwa Radio ba bangata hakae. Ebile boholo ba bona ba ithehetse lebitso hona moo Lesedi FM.

Motsamaisi wa mosebetsi, ke ya dumela hore ba sa ntse ba le bangata bao hape re tlang ho ba utlwa diteisheneng tsena tse kgolo tse jwaleka lona Lesedi FM, Metro FM, SAfm, Radio 2000 le tse ding tse ngata jwalo-jwalo.

Ke ntho e thabisang haholo e etswang ke Qwaqwa Radio ya hore e fe batjha ba rona monyetla wa ho ipabola ka ditalente tsa bona, hape le ho ba fa monyetla oo wa ho iponahatsa le hore hape e ba kwetlise.

Community radio remains a powerful tool of developing local people, and one of the key instruments of development communications. It educates, sensitises, advises and informs local audiences about issues that affect their lives such as health, education, water, sanitation, human rights and dignity, moral regeneration, sports, arts, culture, etc.

We thus as the district and local municipalities need to explore ways of how best can we exploit this community development medium at our disposal. We need to have vigorous and continued engagements

with Qwaqwa Radio with the ultimate aim of establishing a partnership towards the realisation of our local development plans. This will allow a free flow of information and will also avert distortion of facts as the journalists, producers and presenters will get the proper perspective and understanding of issues.

This is for this reason that last month as the district municipality we arranged a media tour of our projects in the whole of the district to give journalists first-hand information and an opportunity for an eye witness account of our progress in the delivery of services in our municipality. By doing so, we were not only giving them access to information but also a chance to report on what they have seen for themselves.

Programme Director, such kind of activities should be encouraged more and more, and also include other activities such as workshops for media personnel on the functioning of local government and for municipal councillors and senior officials on how the media operates. Dialogue between media and government should also be held on regular basis to give updates on issue of development and also to clear misconceptions on issues. Live coverage of some of municipal events, such as budget speeches, key local celebrations and other events, is also of vital importance in letting the community to hear from the horses' mouth rather than just relying on reports.

Motsamaisi wa mosebetsi, nka lebala jwang ho ama ntlha ya hore le rona jwaleka Bommasepala, re tlameha ho bona hore ana re tshehetsa jwang Qwaqwa Radio ka ditjhelete hore e tsebe ho tswela pele ka mosebetsi wa yona haholo jwang haele mona e fuwa tumello ya ho hasa seterekeng sa Thabo Mofutsanyana kaofela. Re tla etsa sena ka ho reka dipapatso nako le nako, mme ha matlole a re

dumella re tla etsa le kopo lekgotleng la motse ho bona ke dife ditshehetso tse ding tseo re ka di etsang.

Ladies and gentlemen, community media is not only an important ally of government and its developmental agenda, but also for many community groups, organisations and churches. Gaining positive and consistent coverage in the media can have an incredible impact on the work they do. It can have a multiplier effect on the good work that groups are doing. If people know what they have achieved and what they do, they are more likely to support these groups. The more support they get, the more likely they are to have a bigger impact.

Community Radio Stations should, however, avoid situations where they would be used as a platform to fight political battles and to antagonise the community and set the people up against their own government.

We should always bear in mind that community radio stations are the creations of our own democratic government for the purpose of developing communities through positive dialogues between the community and the community, as well as the government and the community. People with ulterior motives and hidden agendas as well as those with anti-revolutionary sentiments should not be given the space to abound in their negativity and destructive notions in the community media platforms as William Bernbach says:

"All of us who professionally use the mass media are the shapers of society. We can vulgarize that society. We can brutalize it. Or we can help lift it onto a higher level."

With Qwaqwa Radio at our disposal, I urge all of us who make use of it to do so in order to help lift the community of Thabo Mofutsanyana District to a higher level of development.

As I encourage the board, management and staff of Qwaqwa Radio to keep up the good work and to continue exploring what will always be best practices for this radio station, let me quote the words of Mark Twain as he says, “Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.”

The Honourable Chairperson of the Board of Qwaqwa Radio, it is our hope that following this milestone, Qwaqwa Radio, will continue to uphold the culture of quality community broadcasting, community engagement, training and innovation that has been the cornerstone of its broadcasting existence.

We pledge to walk with you in your journey of self-discovery and growth, whose ultimate goal should be anchored on the development aspirations of the community and livelihood transformation of the people of Thabo Mofutsanyana District.

We at Thabo Mofutsanyana District Council are proud to be associated with you. Kindly accept our most sincere congratulations and best wishes on this auspicious occasion, and in days to come.

Thank You.