## MAYOR'S REMARKS AT MBABANE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL'S ISO 9001 CERTIFICATION CEREMONY

The Honourable Minister of Housing & Urban Development,

Honourable members of the Ministry Portfolio Committee present here today,

The Regional Administrator for Hhohho,

Your Lordships, present today

Honourable Councillors,

**SWASA** Representative

TUV Rheinland Representative,

Senior Government Officials,

CEOs Present today,

Management & Staff of Mbabane Municipal Council,

Distinguished Ladies & Gentlemen,

Sanibonani. It is a great pleasure to stand before you today to make what is probably my last speech before the Mayoral elections next month. I am pleased that what started off as just another strategic objective to improve the quality of service has come to fruition in our term as Councillors and in my term as Mayor. We are particularly honoured and duly humbled that you could all take time out in your busy schedules to share this proud moment with us.

I would firstly like to extend appreciation to the CEO, Management and Staff for their commitment and diligence in the long road that has seen us here today.

Honourable Minister, may I assure you that the path taken by the Municipal Council of Mbabane, is a well traversed route. It is used by a diverse array of organizations, from giant multinational corporations to Small and Medium Enterprises. Having said that Honourable Minister, I am proud to share with the gathering today, that Mbabane is, the first municipal council to receive this certification.

The Municipal Council of Mbabane is a duly constituted public organization in terms of the Urban Government Act, 1969 wherein its functions and responsibilities are elaborated. As a modern institution, it has embraced modern management practices to guide its operations and future development of both the organization and the City.

This is a management system that as a Council we embraced gladly as it was in keeping with our strategic objective to put our customers at the centre of all that we do. It is apt at this point to further point out that the Council slogan "Responsive, quality service on time" is what we aspire to live by.

Honourable Minister I am happy to report that the ISO 9001 system has already started to bear fruit. You will all recall that the Mbabane municipality is one of the urban local governments that is participating in the Swaziland Local Government Project (SLGP) that was launched by His Majesty at the Mavuso Trade Centre two over year ago. As part of its capacity building components, the SLGP provides increased finance for capital projects to those Municipalities that are assessed to have met the set targets. What I am happy to report to the people of Mbabane Honourable Minister is that I believe it is because of the ISO 9001 standard that the Municipality, following the assessment late last year was found to have done very well, and in fact, I am informed we got the top score!

I must point out Honourable Minister that this certification does not, on its own provide the services, for instance we cannot say since we are ISO 9001 we do not have pot holes, as other speakers have pointed out, it simply means we have a system to assist us provide the quality services. As I pointed out when you were here in January on your tour Honourable Minister, without additional substantial financial support from Government, it is difficult to provide these quality services. I wish to thank you Honourable Minister and the Ministry portfolio committee members for your efforts to get government to pay its long outstanding rates. I am informed by staff that Government will this month be paying most of its outstanding rates bill, we thank government for demonstrating true leadership and settling its dues.

Honourable Minister, one of the tenets of the ISO quality systems is commitment to continuous improvement. One of the means Council uses to get feedback from its residents are Ward meetings that are held at least three times a year. Councillors in all the Wards have during February and March scheduled a series of meetings. Honourable Minister, let me share my disappointment with

the distinguished gathering here today, that as a Municipal Council, we are finding it a great challenge meeting with most Mbabane residents as a group. This is especially true in the CBD, the Industrial areas and the formal residential areas, where meetings are scheduled and advertised at cost and we get very disappointing turn outs. The Municipal Council will greatly welcome any suggestions of how residents of the city would like to participate in the affairs of the City. Let me emphatically state that paying rates, is not on its own participating!

In this light, the Council is reviewing the current Ward structures in a quest to improve its forums for engagement and to facilitate effective consultation and participation at local level. What I am referring to Honourable Minister is a development of a Ward Committee system for the Municipality. Once Council has completed its internal review, the public will be invited to comment on this policy. Support on this endeavour will be most appreciated.

Honourable Minister it would be remiss of me not to mention that one of the key Stakeholders that the Council works with is the Rate Payers' and Developers' Association of Mbabane. Their views have been instrumental in guiding the Council over the years and I would like to extend our appreciation to them and further urge them to continue supporting Council by raising issues of concern to their constituents.

It is an aspiration of the Municipal Council to have residents fully informed of services due to them but also to have better understanding of City regulations and effective platforms to use to advocate for improvement.

Honourable Minister and distinguished guests, what the Municipal Council of Mbabane is demonstrating and affirming today, to you all and our esteemed stakeholders and residents of this beautiful city, is that being accredited, means we are committed to meeting the Highest Standards of Quality and Customer Satisfaction and will thrive for Continuous Improvement in all our operations.

To our suppliers and service providers, this means we will be demanding a higher level of performance from you. On those that meet the requirements for higher level and consistency of quality will continue to enjoy the patronage of the Municipal Council in business.

To ensure that the Municipal Council stays true to this commitment, I would like to appeal to individuals, residents, businesses and even visitors to the City to assist the Management, Staff and elected Councillors. We are here to develop this city and provide services. We cannot succeed without the active input and

participation from the business sector, schools, churches and residents. It brings to mind a slogan used in other circles, which I will borrow to amplify my point ..... "A government is a government, through its people".

Let us together build Mbabane to be a city that is a preferred destination known for its quality of life, a city that seeks to deliver world class services, TOGETHER.

I thank you.