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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO DELIVERS REMARKS AT VIRTUAL TOWN
HALL FOR M/WBE'S**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Thank you so much, Maggie. Everyone, welcome. Really, really glad you are part of this gathering. and even though Maggie called me a keynote speaker, I'm going to do better than most keynote speakers, I'm going to keep it really brief, so – we've all been to long, boring keynote speeches. This will not be one of them.

So, first of all, Maggie, thank you. You've done great, great work and ensuring that M/WBEs get opportunity. In your previous role at EDC, I think you did groundbreaking work to expand opportunity there, but now you are painting on a much bigger canvas, all of the agencies in New York City as our M/WBE Director. So, thank you for your leadership. And, everyone, look, I'm excited that we are gathered because over the last few weeks a lot has been happening and we want to really give you a sense of all the changes that are being made, and I want to first put it in context. This work to me is sacred, to ensure that government actually fulfills its obligation to create opportunity across the board, and to really – I use the phrase openly – to redistribute wealth to ensure that people and communities that have worked so hard, but not been rewarded, start to get more and more of their fair share. That's only going to happen with the role of government. I absolutely know we want to see as much fairness as possible, as much investment as possible from the private sector in creating opportunity for all. But in the end, it is the government that actually is the guarantor that our values are lived out. That's what you all depend on us to do, and over the years in this administration, we have tried intensely to change the way the game is played, to change the rules in favor of minority and women-owned businesses, and we've seen already how much impact that can make, and we've worked with a lot of you to determine how to do that. And I want to thank everyone who's advised us, everyone who has shown us different ways of doing things or offered ideas. Many of you have not just been standing back hoping that things would have happened, but you've really been participants with us in determining how to create more fairness. A lot of you fought in Albany for the changes in the legislation that we needed so that we could award more contracts to M/WBEs. A lot of you pressed us to be creative and go farther, and, you know, we have amazing things we're talking about this week, like 10,000 certified M/WBEs, incredible achievement and Maggie, and Jonnel Doris before her, and a lot of other great people contributed to that. We can tell you that now against the goal of \$25 billion that we intended to ensure that in the hands of M/WBEs over a 10-year timeframe, over \$16 billion has already moved and is speeding up.

So, clearly, great things are happening, but we needed to make further structural change to favor M/WBEs. I signed an executive order that has added additional power, additional tools to the process. You're going to hear the details of that. We also announced the fact that we've come to a

really powerful agreement with a lot of our labor community to ensure that working people will benefit from all the City investments and contracting, but also to more and more create opportunity for M/WBEs, and that took a lot of work to say, look, we're not going to succeed as a city, if we are not getting more hands in – more money in the hands of minority and women-owned businesses, and particularly the 27 communities, 27 neighborhoods that have been hardest hit by the coronavirus. We have a very powerful new tool inside our city government. We have a task force on racial inclusion and equity. It's built on a very simple principle that we must make immediate changes in favor of redistribution, that we must address disparities in the most aggressive way possible. And this task force is made up of entirely people of color leaders within the agencies of our City government, chaired by our First Lady, and Deputy Mayor Thompson, Deputy Mayor Perea-Henze. The idea is to turn to the leaders inside government who understand communities of color the best, and to empower them to guide us to the changes we need to make, and they fought very hard to ensure this new plan that we came to, this new project labor agreement with labor also took fully into account the need to invest through M/WBEs.

So, there is a lot going on right now and it's all moving in the direction of justice, and I will only say a few more things quickly. Look, I think our job is to write the wrongs of the past. I think we have an opportunity to do it. We've all been doing that together now for seven years, but in the next 500 days or so, the remainder of this administration, we are going to be sprinting to the finish line and we have an imperative for economic justice, not just – and we've all learned this from the past, the fight for racial justice and equality for civil and human rights is never complete, unless economic rights are also included, and so we are fighting for the economic rights of our communities. We have more and more tools to work with and we feel this is a transformative moment. We've all been through a lot of pain with the coronavirus, and at the same time, we recognize that the old rules have been thrown out. It's a moment for transformations, it's a moment for unprecedented change. That's what we want to deliver. The briefing you're going to get today from Maggie and Jonnel and others is going to show you how we take that vision and put it into action that's going to reach your companies and your communities.

I'll finish by saying, to create a more just society, it does not ultimately come from the top-down. We in government have to set the framework, but the real change is going to come from all of you. Every time you win a contract and then you turn around and employ people from the community, you are making that change. Every time you prove the power inability of minority and women-owned business, you are making that change. There is no way New York City can build back without you. Lot of times, the dialogue about New York City's future revolves around some of those famous major corporations, and of course they're part of a puzzle, but I actually think the future of New York City is in our neighborhoods. It's in our small businesses. It's in the kinds of companies that you built with your own sweat and toil, the kinds of companies that actually are going to turn around and hire your fellow New Yorkers and empower communities that must be part of our new reality. We will not succeed as a city if we repeat profound disparity, it won't be sustainable. It's not morally right, but it also just practically won't be sustainable. So, I think we're on the cusp of something great right now. And the briefing you're about to receive from really fantastic public servants, true believers in equity, you should see as a beginning, not an end. These are just the most recent steps we're taking, but we have 500 days to do so much more. We're going to go to Albany and fight hard for legislation to ensure that there'll be local hiring when government money is used on major projects, to make sure the

communities that are so often left out now are the communities that get the jobs. We're going to need your help to get that done. We have a lot of changes ahead.

So, join us in a 500-day sprint to the finish. Join us in creating fairness and equality. I have great faith in all of you that with your help, with your partnership, amazing things are going to happen as this city comes back and comes back fairer and better. Thank you everyone. And back to you, Maggie.

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