



**ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM,
MR M.N MOKOENA, MPL, DURING A DEBATE ON
THE ANC CENTENARY CELEBRATION AT THE
MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE,
NELSPRUIT**

6 March, 2012

- Somlomo wesishaya mthetho sendlu yase Mpumalanga, Umhlonishwa uBaba Lubisi;
- Iphini likasomlomo Umhlonishwa umama, VF Siwela;
- Amalunga ahloniphekile wonke wendlu yesishaya mthetho sase-Mpumalanga
- Sibingilele zonke izivakashi
- Manene namanenekazi

Sanibonani nonke

Good Afternoon!

Ngithanda ukulandela izikhulumi ezithathe lenkundla ngaphambi kwami, nami ngidlale iqhaza lokuhalalisela ukhongoloso ngokuhlanganisa iminyaka eyikhulu azalwa.



Okukuqala somlomo ohloniphekile, kumele sicacise ukuthi kubaluleke ngani ukuthi indlu yesishayamthetho ibe-nenkulumo mpikiswano ngomkhosi wokugubha iminya eyikhulu I-African National Congress Yazalwa.

In this regard I will borrow the phrase by the Deputy President, Kgalema Motlanthe, at the Parliamentary debate on the centenary of the Union of South Africa on 1 June 20110.

I quote “We are assembled here not to apportion blame and to exclude others from sharing in nation-building and social cohesion programmes. In our approach to commemorate history we should neither be eclectic nor silent” Close quote.

These words help us to understand the importance of current achievements versus the historical baseline from which important lessons have been drawn, and more importantly we must use these milestones and



parallel challenges to craft a **shared singular vision** as a people.

This noble exercise must find practical expression in this August house constituted by public representatives who were democratically elected.

Secondly the ANC as the leader of the society and a ruling party has brought about positive changes in the lives of the poor not only to members of the ANC but to society as a whole and invariably its policy discourse in the next hundred years is also going to affect the society as a whole.

Honourable Speaker, it is this understanding which must answer the question, why this debate in the Provincial Legislature.

The thrust and focus of this debate is on equal rights – “All shall have equal rights.” A clarion call made many decades ago, a vision which has driven the ANC for a



century and will continue to do so until it has been achieved.

Sithi wonke umuntu kumele abe-namalungelo alinganayo:

Amalungelo alinganayo

- Kwezemfundo (education)
- Kweze-mpilo (health)
- Kwezenhlalakahle (social)
- Kweze-politiki (politics)
- Kwezomnotho (economy)

These are the ideals cherished and fought for by the founding fathers of the glorious movement we are celebrating today, and under compelling circumstances many heroes and heroines laid down their lives for these ideals.

Speakers before have already outlined in detail the suffering of the African people pre and post 1912 which characterised the liberation struggle led by the ANC.

However, Honourable Speaker, I want to bring to the fore the Tomlison Commission report on the socio-economic development of the so-called Bantu Reserves of the Republic published in 1954 which recommended a complete separate development of blacks and whites or alternative terms used non-Europeans and Europeans.

This report argued that complete segregation will lessen the state of tension between the races, and the core of separation was:

- Territorial segregation which eventually led to Bantustan policy and urban Bantu Council;
- Political segregation; including the introduction of Bantu education meant to ensure that Africans remain permanent minors in the country of their birth.
- Industrial separation – which ensured that trade unions exclude all African workers.

In response to the findings of this report, the former President General of the ANC, Zachariah Richard Mahabane whom we are honouring this month, made profound observations and cautioned the Apartheid regime that South Africans are on the unstoppable march to liberate themselves.

The tide of national and political consciousness is in full swing, no amount of repressive Legislation or policy or any device of apartheid can stop the march to freedom.

As you would know Zachariah Mahabane, like most former Presidents of this glorious movement was ignored by the regime at the time and this led to untold sufferings of our people and a protracted battle waged by the ANC.

What did the ANC say at that point (At its formative years?)

- The franchise: It is the right of every man and woman over the age of 21 to vote.



- ANC called for a compulsory, free and uniform education for all children, with free meals up to the age of 16, free books and school equipment for the needy.
- Decent housing and privacy for everybody.
- Freedom of movement and occupation.
- Full equality rights for all citizens without distinction of race, colour and sex.
- The 1913 native land act was at the centre of the ANC struggle.
- Apartheid Labour legislations and their application to the South African economy were not spared either. Already in early 40's demands were articulated on the freedom to organise trade unions, the right to strike, equal pay for equal work, eight hours a day in all industries, these demands were aimed at dismantling the basic structures of the Apartheid economy starting with the labour market.

So it was indeed a long painful journey of resistance, battles and sacrifices. The progress we have made since 1912 is worthy of celebration by the people of South Africa, the African continent and the world. Unity within the ANC, Strategic Alliance partners and sister countries was instrumental in achieving the aforesaid revolutionary targets.

Long before the ANC was born, our people were conscious of the need for continental unity in the struggle. In 1897, Enoch Mankanyi Sontonga composed a song, Nkosi Sikelela i-Africa, which talks of Africa (and not South Africa), and “uphondo lwayo” (its horn) meaning Somalia, Ethiopia and countries of the region were to be uplifted high. This song is now the National anthem for South Africa and the glue upon which our National Unity is embedded.

On this day, we will never forget the people of Southern Africa as a whole who supported the oppressed masses of South Africa – Tanzania, Mozambicans, Namibians, Angolans, Zimbabweans, Zambians, Botswana, Swazi’s



and Basotho constituted the bedrock of which the ANC has grown from strength to strength to liquidate the crime of apartheid and accelerated a political and economic discourse for a better life for all – The history of the 100year old struggle of the ANC would not be complete without reference to the contribution of these countries.

The ANC-led government in its 17years of existence might not have reached or completely reversed the socio-economic damage inflicted over 300years but the lives and aspirations of our people have been uplifted to unprecedented heights because they know that the ANC lives, ANC leads and as long as it is in power their lives are bound to change for the better despite all the constraints.

The late, Mwalimu Julius K Nyerere at the beginning of the ANC conference, in Arusha Tanzania, 1st December 1987 correctly advised that, **political power** for the people of South Africa is the key to a **non-racial and democratic future** and it will be **achieved**.



But its achievement will only be the beginning. It will not by itself transform the social and economic conditions. The ANC is alive to this reality which constitutes the second phase of the struggle.

Accordingly, the centenary represents a solemn and historic moment for the people of our country, the continent and indeed progressive humanity in general.

The celebration as I pointed out at the beginning also affords us an excellent opportunity to, as our icon Tata Nelson Mandela said, ***“take a moment to rest, to steal a view of the glorious vista that surrounds us, to look back on the distance we have come without lingering.”***

Looking at the vista, we can say without contradiction that much has been achieved over the last ten decades.

Some of our major achievements, on the road we have travelled include, but are not limited to:



- All our people have been united behind the struggle for freedom and democracy with restoration of their dignity.
- A legitimate state that derives its authority from the people through regular election and proper participation has been established. In sync with the preamble of the freedom charter which says no government can justly claim authority if it is not based on the will of the people.
- We have put in place a progressive constitution with its Bill of rights.
- Freedom of movement, association and speech has been guaranteed.
- Our country can proudly participate in the affairs of the global family of nations through international fora such as United Nations, Common wealth, Security council and economic vehicles such as BRICS.



- Working together we have provided basic needs however a lot still needs to be done, there are still a lot of challenges that lay ahead and the ANC led government has been brutally honest in assessing progress made.
- Too few people work.
- Poor standard of education and low level of skills.
- Infrastructure is poorly located, under-maintained and insufficient to foster growth.
- Spatial patterns as proposed by Tomlison commission in 1954 continue to exclude the poor from fruits of development.
- The economy is overly and unsustainably resource intensive.
- Public Services are uneven and often of poor quality.
- South Africa remains divided.

These challenges threaten to erode the gains of the NDR and the attainment of the vision of a national democratic society.

We call upon different sectors to use this opportunity not only to evaluate the distance we have travelled but to partner with the ANC-led government towards transforming South African society as we enter the new centenary including among others, the eradication of **poverty**, **unemployment** and **inequality** as prioritised by the New Growth Path (NGP) and the 2030 vision of the country.

2030 Vision

In the bigger scheme of things – a draft National Development Plan which seeks to unite South Africans behind a singular shared vision has already been tabled and it calls upon all South Africans to prioritise in first 20years of the new century:

- Creating jobs and livelihoods;



- Expanding infrastructure;
- Transition to a low carbon economy;
- Transforming urban and rural areas;
- Improve education and training;
- Provide quality health care;
- Build capable/developmental state;
- Fighting corruption and hence accountability;
- Transforming the society and uniting the nation;

Honourable Speaker I am happy to announce that as a Province we are already in that space advancing the 2030 vision of the country through the Mpumalanga Economic Growth and Development path and the MEGDP POA which we believe will get Mpumalanga working, growing and moving.

In our view the state must play a central and strategic role, driving investments especially in underdeveloped areas as we are doing with CRDP programmes and the



infrastructure programme as announced both in SONA and SOPA.

The President of the ANC Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma gave a profound summary of the vision of the next century when he said:

Open quote “The centrepiece of the ANC’s programme for the economy is the pursuit of growth, development and redistribution. We need to increase the wealth base of the country by producing more goods and services in the same measure as we improve the quality of life of especially the poor, and effect in a variety of ways, the redistribution of wealth and income in favour of those previously excluded from the economic mainstream.” Close quote.

In conclusion, truth be told that our history when viewed in its entirety, offers us salutary benefits on how to deal with effects of economic exclusion and equal rights for



all as a basis of building social cohesion in a National Democratic Society.

Let us remember the fact that silence is as much an omission as it is a commission.

Halala! ANC as you prepare yourself for another 100years of unbroken struggle to defend and consolidate the gains you have made and commitment to complete the work that could not be concluded in the first 100 years of your existence.

Happy Birthday ANC, How old are you now?

I thank you