



## ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM, MR M.N MOKOENA, MPL, DURING A DEBATE ON HUMAN RIGHTS DAY AT THE MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE, NELSPRUIT

**13 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!***

Somlomo kanye nosiswebhu we nhlango ebuseyo, mangiqale ngokubonga indlu yesi Shaya Mthetho sase Mpumalanga ngokuhlela inkulumo mpikiswano ebaluleke kangaka.



Inkulumo mpikiswano ephathelene namalungelo abantu. Kungumsebenzi wendlu yesi Shaya Mthetho ukuthi sivikele, sithuthukise futhi sifundise ngamalungelo abantu.

Izikhulumi zethu zosuku zichazile kabanzi ngomlando womzabalazo wokulelwa amalungelo abantu oyingxenye womzabalazo wenkululeko oholwa phambili i-ANC nezinye izinhlangano ebekade zinombono (vision) wenkululeko.

Kusobala kuwo wonke umuntu ngisho naku Democratic Alliance (DA) mbala nakubo abomafika izolo i-COPE ukuthi amalungelo abantu okukhulunywa ngawo namhlanje ayimiphumela yegazi elaphalala, izimpilo ezalahleka.

Yingakho kubalulekile ukuthi lenkulumo mpikiswano siyinikeze isizotha esifanelekile.

Somlomo, ngithanda ukuphothula lenkulumo mpikiswano yanamuhla ngokuthi ngingcizelele amalungelo abantu ngibhekise komama, amalungelo engane, abakhubazekile kanye nabasebenzi base mapulazini.

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members;



The preamble of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa correctly honours the freedom fighters who dedicated their lives to the struggle for the liberation of our country and people. It honours the victims of Apartheid and the workers who built the economy.

The preamble enjoins the democratic state to develop the full potential of every human being which is the essential element of a united, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist prosperous South Africa.

The ANC realised and acknowledged that the recovery of the full humanity of all South Africans, both black and white, can only be achieved through the realisation of:

- The creation of decent jobs;
- The provision of quality education;
- Healthcare services
- Security of person and property;
- Food Security;

These Socio-economic rights are also found in our historical documents such as the Africans Claims of 1943, the Women's Charter of 1954 and the Freedom Charter of 1955.

These rights have always been the integral part of our protracted struggle, and March 21 represents one of those unfortunate skirmishes.

We all agree that March 21 every year opens up the already healed wounds, given the merciless beatings and murdering of our people – who were mauled down, despite them being unarmed. Their biggest sin was to fight for their human rights – they wanted to be treated equally like others. They wanted justice to prevail. However in the eyes of the rulers of the time, a black person was not equal to them.

As we commemorate *Human Rights Day* this year, let us do so by paying homage to the most vulnerable members of our society, that is, **women, children, farm workers and people with disabilities**. This is because their rights as human beings continue to be trampled on despite them being guaranteed by our country's progressive Constitution.

The *Bill of Rights*, in our country's Constitution – which is a cornerstone of South Africa's democracy, enshrines the rights of all people in our country and affirms the democratic values of **human dignity, equality and freedom**.

Chapter 2 section 10 guarantees **human dignity**, stating that *“Everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected.”*

I submit that an essential tenet of any democratic framework is the Principle of human rights.

We are very aware that the main thrust of the Bill of Rights relates to the first-generation Rights, civil and political rights, the right to life, the right to vote, to a fair trial and to freedom of speech.

Honourable Speaker, Speakers before me have demonstrated to a larger degree that much has been achieved in this regard. Disadvantaged and vulnerable groups are intended to be the main beneficiaries of these rights. Generally these are people who are most affected by poverty and experience a number of barriers that block access to resources, opportunities and services in society.

Ironically, the vulnerable section of our population is one which is being failed by society.



It has become widely accepted that promoting gender equality, women's empowerment and ending violence against women is essential to achieving human development, poverty eradication and economic growth not only in South Africa but amongst the nations of the world.

Despite these Constitutional guarantees, our mothers – women continue to be ill-treated in our communities. They are abused by the very same men who are supposed to protect them.

This is a serious anti-Constitution behaviour which should never be tolerated and should be uprooted at all costs. Women have played a significant role in fighting for the restoration of our human rights, and thus their rights should be equally protected. Democracy by definition cannot afford to be gender blind it must strive towards equality and representation of women and men in all key decision making processes.

South Africa also included second and third generation rights, Socio-economic rights as enforceable human rights. These rights include the right to adequate housing, healthcare, food, social security and education. Again these rights seem not to find expression in the farming community.



The plight of farm workers continues to haunt us despite the *Bill of Rights* guaranteeing them a right to fair labour practices and protection against slavery and servitude. They endure inhuman long working hours under the scorching sun making money for their employers, who in most cases, trample on their human rights.

In this regard as a Province we must continue to honour the Lion of the East, Cde Gert Sibande who was instrumental in bringing to the fore the appalling working conditions that farm workers in Bethal were subjected to, and today a lot of ground has been covered to protect them.

Child labour, despite it being outlawed, continues to be rampant. These future generations continue to endure ill-treatment from both ends of the stick. They are sometimes abused by their own parents, family members and the community at large, and on the other hand, they are forced into child-labour.

This situation can never be left unchallenged – we collectively have a Constitutional mandate to protect and safeguard the human rights of these vulnerable members of our society.



Honourable Members; as contained in the ANC historical documents, our Constitution guarantees a **right to health care, food, water and social security** to everyone.

Our main challenge therefore, is to deal effectively with what I've termed the inseparable triplets, that is, **unemployment, poverty and inequality**. Without addressing these infamous triplets, women, children and farm workers will never truly enjoy their human rights. They continue to be the most unemployed; affected much by poverty and endure inequality.

***Working together, we can do more*** to restore the dignity and protect the human rights of women, children and farm workers.

In closing I would like to remind this August House of the profound words of the ANC Women's League founding president Charlotte Maxeke who said in her Presidential address to the National Council of African Women.

***“This work is not for yourselves — kill that spirit of self, and do not live above your people, but live with them. If you can rise, bring someone with you. Do away with that fearful animal of jealousy – kill that spirit & love one another as brothers and sisters. The other animal that will tear us apart is tribalism.” Close quote.***





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Department:  
Economic Development, Environment and Tourism  
MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

*The Struggle for Equal rights for all continues...*

***I thank you!***