

MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE PRESENTED TO THE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM, MR J.L MAHLANGU, MPL, TO APPRECIATE THE RETURN OF THE ORIGINAL COPY OF THE FREEDOM CHARTER.

Friday, 14 May 2010

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to table a motion without notice for this house to acknowledge and appreciate the return of the signed original copy of the *Freedom Charter* to the people of South Africa.

Noting that:

The signed original copy of the *Freedom Charter* – the people’s commitment document which paved the way for the freedom we are enjoying today, has been returned to its rightful owners; the people of South Africa. This historic document was officially received by the Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa, Mr Kgalema Motlanthe and the Minister of Arts and Culture, Ms Lulu Xingwana on Friday, 07 May 2010 at Liliesleaf Farm in Rivonia.

Further noting that:

The hand-over of this historic document at a farm where our liberation stalwart, *iSithwalandwe-Seaparankwe*, former President Nelson Mandela and other 155 other political activists were arrested when the brutal apartheid police raided Liliesleaf Farm on 11 July 1963, was meant to pay tribute to them for their invaluable contribution towards realising the commitments contained in the document. The Charter took months to be signed since there were restrictions placed by the apartheid government on the movement of political activists, meaning that there was never a collective signing ceremony of the document.

It was circulated underground so that it could be signed by all leaders of the liberation movements. However most of the signed copies were seized by the police and some served as evidence during the Treason Trial. It took eight (8) months for the then ANC President, Chief Albert Luthuli to sign the Charter in November 1960, after it was signed by Monty Naicker of the SA Indian Congress in February 1960.

Also noting that:

The *Freedom Charter* is a priceless document adopted by the people of South Africa during the People's Congress convened at Kliptown on 26 June 1955. That occasion, the real Congress of the People, became a historic point of no return for South Africa, hence it is crucial that we must preserve the pledge and commitment of selfless South Africans, for future generations to understand where our once divided nation, came from. The People's Charter was saved from the hammer following the intervention of the Liliesleaf Trust and our government. The almost sale of our priceless Charter shows how greediness can drive people to want to sell other people's history.

We appreciate that the original document will be stored at the National Archives, together with the original South African flag signed in 1994 by former President Nelson Mandela and his two deputies.

Honourable Speaker, I therefore move that:

- 1. The house unanimously move to welcome the return of the priceless People's Charter to our country;**
- 2. The house denounce the greediness of those who wanted to make profit from the priceless People's Charter;**
- 3. The house conveys our greatest appreciation to the Liliesleaf Trust and our National Government for saving our Freedom Charter from opportunists.**

I so move!