

SPEECH BY CLR MPHOS PARKS TAU, EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF JOHANNESBURG, AT
THE JUNE 16 COMMEMORATION EVENT, SOWETO.

16 JUNE 2015

Premier of Gauteng His Excellency David Makhura

MEC's present here today

MMC for Community Development Cllr Chris Vondo

MMC's present here today

Fellow Councillors

Government officials

Ndlovu family members

The 1976 generation and their family members

Representatives of the Each One Teach One and the June 16 Foundations

Members of the community

Students

Ladies and gentlemen

Programme Director: after his release from prison in 1990, the late President
Nelson Mandela concluded that, "since my release, I have become more

convinced than ever that the real makers of history are the ordinary men and women of our country". Using his clan name as we often do with respect and affection, Madiba as a struggle veteran was quite aware of the role of ordinary people in the fight against apartheid. His words indeed resonate with the activities of the 1976 Soweto generation, of which the late Hastings Ndlovu was one.

Ladies and gentlemen, today, 39 years ago, Hastings Ndlovu, with fellow students from Soweto schools, was crossing a bridge to Orlando West when, shockingly, he was shot in the head by apartheid police.

Ndlovu and his friends were on their way to Orlando West to join others in protesting against the introduction of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in black schools. This grievance was part of a wider rejection of the inferior Bantu Education and of apartheid as a whole.

Hastings Ndlovu was the first student shot during the 1976 Soweto insurgency. Sadly, later that day, he died at Baragwaneth hospital. Ladies and gentlemen, by taking to the streets, Hastings Ndlovu, Hector Pieterse, also fatally

wounded on June 16, and other youths were making heard their voices, long suppressed by the apartheid regime. May the souls of all those who died during the student uprising of 1976 rest in peace.

Programme Director, for our country, June 16 was a watershed event that changed the history and direction of South Africa in the fight against apartheid injustice. From the 1976 uprising until the liberation of our country in 1994, no longer would the apartheid regime weigh the youth of this country lightly.

Ladies and gentlemen, the courage of the young lions of 1976 was not wasted. We have not as a country, and as a government, forgotten the selfless and noble bravery of our young heroes such as Hector Pieterse and Hastings Ndlovu. We have kept their gallant deeds in our hearts and minds. In the spirit of true patriotism, we have gathered here today on Youth Day, in the Hector Pieterse Museum, a special place which symbolises the 1976 student uprising, to commemorate the lives and the deeds of that great generation.

Programme Director, this Museum is itself in a place of special significance, close to the areas of conflict with the police that led to the killings of Hastings

Ndlovu and Hector Pieterse. The location of this Museum emphasises government's commitment to ensuring that the history and legacy of the 1976 youth is properly preserved and upheld. It is in this spirit that after these proceedings we will lay a wreath, in the Museum's sacred space, in honour of all those who died during the Soweto uprising of 1976.

Ladies and gentlemen, the great African thinker Frantz Fanon said that "*each generation* must discover its mission, fulfil it or betray it". Fanon was imbued with revolutionary ideas and understood that the struggle is not static but evolves over time.

His words are in line with the theme for this year's Youth Month: "*Youth moving South Africa forward*". The problems and challenges that face our country today require our youth - the bedrock of liberated South Africa - to be innovators and creators, and to be as fervent advocates of change and social justice as the youth of 1976. The problems confronting our country today require not only government involvement but youth intervention as well. They include analysing and confronting social upheavals like the recent xenophobic attacks, unemployment, poverty, alcohol and drug abuse as well as HIV/AIDS

related problems. In Fanon's words, the 1976 youth generation fulfilled its mission, and did so gloriously: this generation must likewise discover its mission, and fulfil it.

To the youth amongst us here today, you will know the rights those we celebrate today fought for. You should, for example, familiarise yourselves with educational discourse and transformation in this country. You need to ask yourselves if the curriculum at school and tertiary level serves the purpose that the students of 1976 fought and died for. Will it, amongst other things, prepare the youth to participate in a fast-changing national, continental and global economy?

Too few young people are entering the workforce, starting their own businesses, or graduating with formal qualifications which empower them to make their way in the world.

The hard numbers available in official statistics do indeed sketch a complex and challenging picture.

Census 2011 indicates that just under 800 000 (eight hundred thousand) working age young people (those between the ages of 19-34) within the City of Johannesburg (CoJ) are not in employment, education or training. Given

population growth and flat/ declining rates of labour force absorption at lower skill levels, this number could realistically be projected at or near 1 million.

Ladies and gentlemen, the City of Johannesburg is leading by example in addressing our urban youth problems, including youth unemployment and poverty. We are doing so in an effort to ensure that the legacy of the youth of 1976 is maintained by the ANC led government of the people which came into power in 1994. The City has put in place Jozi @ Work and the Vulindlel' eJozi programmes to ensure that our people, and in particular our young people, play a robust and active part in the development of the city's economy.

Through Vulindlel'eJozi we are building a new kind of public intervention which aims to break down barriers to opportunity for 200 000 young people by July 2016. Vulindlel'eJozi will enable them to enter work, education, and training, steadily and thereby surely improving youth economic participation.

And through Jozi@work we have already created opportunity for hundreds of new co-operatives and entrepreneurs who are working on the ground to make a living. Jozi@work equips communities to partner with the City and be co-

producers of municipal services. These two programmes will ensure that the City's 1 million youth who are not in employment, education and training, provided they put their hands up to be part of the solution, will have the opportunity to do so.

In closing, let me thank all of you for attending today's event aimed at commemorating the life and times of the June 16 youth brigade. Today we are in particular remembering Hastings Ndlovu. Let me also thank the Premier of Gauteng, his Excellency David Makhura for being with us at today's commemoration.

Lastly let me thank Hastings Ndlovu's family present here today, and the many other parents and relatives whose children were the torchbearers of the 1976 uprising, for giving us the valiant youths who changed the political landscape of our country. I would like to emphasise that the Hastings Ndlovu Sports Multi-Purpose Court at the Mbuyisa Makhubo Primary School, which we are launching later today, will keep the late Hastings Ndlovu's name and legacy in high esteem. The Hastings Ndlovu Sports Multi-Purpose Court will also go a long way in contributing to social cohesion in our community by bringing young

people together in healthy, strenuous, comradely competition. We dearly need this to achieve a non-racial, non-sexist and non-xenophobic society.

As the City of Johannesburg our intention is to ensure that sport thrives and that it is developed from the grassroots as guided by the National Sports Plan of our country. However, realistically, government cannot do this alone, and family initiatives like the establishment of the Hastings Ndlovu Sports Multi-Purpose Court are important in encouraging and bringing about mass participation in sports. Johannesburg remains a sporting city of choice; collaborating with all sporting federations and councils and building future champions for the City and the country. Without doubt, Hastings Ndlovu Sports Multi- Purpose Court will contribute substantially to achieving our goals as a City in the important sphere of sport.

In closing, we are glad on this chilly, early morning, to mark the dawning also of national Youth Day.

This is a day that must be deeply important to all who live in Joburg, not just because the events the day commemorates happened right here, but because a great effort to secure the future of this City's youth is being led here.

This great effort can lead not only the City, but the republic – and indeed the eyes of national government are upon us as we make our way.

The majority of people who live in Joburg are under the age of 35. We are one of the youngest parts of this young nation, and its most dynamic. Our youth can lead this society, this economy, this republic – to prosperity. It is our task as a city committed to innovation and transformation to enable the space for such leadership.

Thank you.