

REMARKS BY CLLR MPHONG PARKS TAU, EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF JOHANNESBURG, AT THE AT THE PRAYER SERVICE TO COMMEMORATE THE VICTIMS OF THE NIGERIAN CHURCH BUILDING COLLAPSE, JOHANNESBURG, 20 NOVEMBER 2014

His Excellency, the Honourable Premier of Gauteng, David Makhura

Executive Mayors

Senior Government Officials

Members of different denominations

Ladies and Gentlemen

Dumelang

As the Executive Mayor of the City of Johannesburg and as Chairperson of SALGA in the Gauteng province, I would like to welcome you all to this deeply touching ceremony where we grieve for our countrymen and women and for all those from other countries who died tragically in Lagos, Nigeria, on the 12th of September this year. This ceremony connects us spiritually to our countrymen who were called to higher service on that terrible day. We are all shaken by this tragedy and our hearts are heavy with sorrow and grief.

To the families who have lost their loved ones - our deep and sincere condolences and may God bless and comfort all of you during these trying times. I request you to keep your faith in God, the Almighty, and allow Him to lead us during these days of heartbreaking grief and mourning. As the nation we are with you and will keep you in our prayers.

Isaiah 26 verse 19: fully explains the meaning of death when it says:

Your dead will rise up

My corpses will rise up

Awake and shout joyfully

Your residents in the dust!

For your dew is as the dew of the morning

And the earth will let those powerless in death come to life

As government, and speaking for the country as a whole, we are deeply touched by the tragedy that befell your loved ones. We recognise that moral and spiritual support is what you desperately need in these trying times. This is why we are here today, to share your pain and sorrow and to journey with you as you commence your healing process. We know that closure seems far away, almost impossible, at present, but take courage: eventually, with the help of God, it will come.

As government we have demonstrated our deeply-felt commitment to you, the bereaved families, since you were struck by the tragedy on the 12th September. We have worked around the clock,

hand in glove with the Nigerian authorities, to identify and repatriate all the mortal remains for their final interment, each and every one, in the soil of our beloved South Africa.

In closing, we would like to thank all of you for attending this prayer meeting: from those of you representing the country's many faiths and denominations to government officials and the ordinary men and women of our country. We are humbled by your presence here today as we share the loss of our beloved countrymen and women. May the souls of all the departed rest in peace.

Thank You