

SPEAKER'S NOTES FOR CLR MALLY MOKOENA, ACTING EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF JOHANNESBURG, AT THE 38th ANNIVERSARY OF 2014 NATIONAL YOUTH DAY CELEBRATIONS

16 June 2014

Reflecting on the significance of the young people's contribution to South Africa's liberation, the former African National Congress President, Oliver Reginald Tambo, once remarked: ***"a nation that does not nurture its youth; does not deserve a future."***

Programme director, (? Parliamentarians present here today?), the Premier of Gauteng: Mr David Makhura, the MEC for Sports, Arts, Culture and Recreation: Ms Molebatsi Bopape, Members of the Provincial Executive and Legislature, Madam Speaker, Members of the Johannesburg Executive Committee, Councillors and distinguished guests.

I wish to welcome you to this event at this venue, which 38 years ago provided the backdrop for a march against the Apartheid government's policy of unilaterally implementing Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. Many who were children rising against oppression, who are present here today, will also recall the excellent quality of the youth leadership.

The route are we going to take today, the places where we will be laying wreaths, and the bridge we will pass are landmarks which are etched in our collective memories.

I thus want to acknowledge and welcome the representatives of the 1976 generation and their families who are present and those who are not. Let us also take this opportunity to have a moment of silence in order to also remember all those who died. I commend the youth of 1976 for their courage, resilience and steadfastness in the face of a brutally violent and oppressive regime.

Democratic South Africa, the vibrant province of Gauteng and the dynamic City of Johannesburg, would not exist in their current form without brave actions of the 1976 students' uprising. Despite many being

killed, imprisoned and exiled, these young students were undeterred and stubbornly committed to the struggle for liberation and freedom.

We are especially grateful to the province of Gauteng, represented today by the Premier, the MEC and members of the legislature, for their initiatives and partnership with Johannesburg in the development of this precinct, where the contribution of the youth is suitably commemorated.

The handing over of the June 16 Memorial Acre to the City of Johannesburg forms part of a broader initiative to preserve our history, and establish special venues that remind us that we must continue in our mission to entrench our belief in democracy, non-racism, non-sexism and to combat inequality, poverty and unemployment.

The people of Soweto, visitors and tourists are now able to access a number of venues such as the Memorial Acre, the Statue of Tsietshi Mashinini, the Hector Pieterse Memorial, the Struggle Trail, Morris Isaacson High, Phefeni Junior High and Naledi High School, which occupy a central place in our memories about June 16 1976.

These venues form part of the City's broader efforts to contribute to the writing of a new history, and a new narrative of our country – based on the values espoused in our 20 year-old democracy, and in our Constitution. In that sense, we are redressing century-old wrongs: where the contributions of the majority of our people, have been deliberately ignored and pushed to the margins of our consciousness.

I therefore trust that the June 16 Interpretation Centre, will lead to a new interpretation of our past in order to inspire students, poets, artists and photographers, to infuse life in our history, and educate future generations about the richness of our heritage.

What we are witnessing today is part of our broader strategic drive to transform spatial patterns in Johannesburg through our Corridors of Freedom and investment in infrastructure, so as to eradicate the legacy of a city divided on the basis of race and privilege and create a more cohesive society.

Johannesburg is a “***City at Work and a City that works***”. A City where our citizens can walk, engage with public art works, visit museums,

heritage and cultural sites, such as in the Newtown precinct; the Vilakazi precinct, the Kliptown Museum, the Walter Sisulu Square of Dedication and right here at the June 16 Memorial Acre.

The contribution to arts, culture and heritage, should also create opportunities for open dialogue and inclusive discussion, which are prerequisites for the emergence of an informed, engaged and empowered citizenry.

I am especially pleased by the launch of the free Wi-Fi facilities at Phefeni Secondary School. I sincerely thank the sponsors and project initiators who have made this possible. Johannesburg is engaged in cutting edge initiatives using technology to improve our residents' quality of life.

This year we are completing the roll-out of our broadband network. During the 2014 State of the City Address, Executive Mayor Parks Tau announced the city's intention to roll-out one thousand Wi-Fi hotspots throughout the City, before the end of his mayoral term.

The broadband network to be rolled out in the city's public libraries will significantly increase access to the internet and open online courses. We envisage that 85 libraries will have free internet access by the end of this calendar year.

Indeed, one of the objectives of the Freedom Charter, signed 1955 in Kliptown, is that: "the doors of learning and culture shall be opened to all".

There is an important connection between the historical events that took place at this venue 38 years ago, and our progressive efforts to use technology as a tool of social and economic change. In the same way in which the 1976 youth led the struggle for a better education system, the 2014 generation will be able to access a new world of knowledge through our investment in technology.

It is fitting that we commemorate the heroic actions of the compatriots who rose against state repression in the June 16 1976 including the hundreds who lost their lives, by investing in education, infrastructure

and technology to empower the next generation to face the future with confidence.

This event marks an important milestone in our route to establishing a World Class African City.

I thank you.

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INTRODUCING GAUTENG PREMIER DAVID MAKHURA

Ladies and gentleman David Makhura is the new premier of Gauteng Province. He was a member National Executive Committee of the African National Congress Youth League from 1998 to 2004. He was the Deputy General Secretary of the National Health and Allied Workers Union from 1997 to 2001 National Education Secretary National Health and Allied Workers Union South Africa 1997 – 2001.

Premier Makhura holds a Master of Science (MSc) degree in Public Policy and Management from the University of London and is studying towards a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Future Studies at the University of Stellenbosch. Premier Makhura is a trustee of the Board of the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation.