

# KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY ACTING MEC. MOTHLAPING, ON THE OCASSION OF THE LAUNCH OF THE ARTISAN CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMME IN KURUMAN

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7 September 2018

Programme Director

Head of the Departments and Institutions

District and Municipal Mayors

Distinguished guests

Members of the media

Ndiyanibulisa nonke!

Molweni, Dumelang, Goeie môre, Good morning!

## **INTRODUCTION**

President Cyril Ramaphosa in his State of the Nation Address (SONA) this year stated and I quote:

*“We are at a moment in the history of our nation when the people through their determination, have started to turn the country around....Now is the time to lend a hand. Now is the time for each of us to say, Thuma Mina, ‘Send Me’ Now is the time for all of us to work together, in honour of Nelson Mandela, to building a new, better South Africa for all,”* close quote.

Programme Director and all partners present, 2018 is declared the “Year of Renewal, Unity and Jobs” and we commemorate the centenary year of Nelson Mandela and Albertina Sisulu, who taught us the importance of service, humility, hard work, sacrifice and respect for people. They were leaders who acted as role models and served

tirelessly in spite of the massive repression visited on them and their families, their commitment never weakened as they dedicated their lives to:

- the creation of a “united, non-racial, non-sexist democratic and prosperous society”
- service to the people of South Africa especially the poor and the marginalised
- the struggle for the liberation of the oppressed and exploited masses
- And the realisation of the ideals of the Freedom Charter. In one accord we are here today to do the same.

On the back of Women’s Month we continue to commemorate Ma Sisulu was truly a woman of fortitude. Her strength, resilience and the will to carry on shone like a beacon in the darkest days of apartheid. The apartheid system bred anger, pain, intolerance, a culture of violence, and lack of respect for life and, indeed, rights in general. Her legacy continues to inspire many women and young girls today. She continues to be portrayed as a stalwart of our struggle who is remembered for her strength, compassion and tireless commitment to the people of this country. May she continue to be an inspiration to all of us who is present today - the women in particular.

Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to elude that I am appeased to know that out of the total 160 learners, 29 women are enrolled in the Electrical trade and 65 women in the Plumbing trade. This sets the recruitment rate of women versus male at 59%; meaning that we are defying the myth and stereotype that construction is a male dominated industry. As ‘Trendsetters,’ through the implementation of our programmes we are changing the landscape of the construction industry.

The ANC-led government through the Thuma Mina Campaign is committed to reconnect with the people through activities that improve people’s lives and solve the problems they face. Since 1994 we worked tirelessly with the people to create a better life for all and to improve our communities. The ANC is a caring organisation that works to address the peoples’ and community’s problems. The triple burden of poverty, inequality and unemployment, at the backdrop of a weak economy, calls all

organisations to develop innovative strategies, and transformative business concepts to collectively combat these challenges. Radical economic transformation is needed to turn around the generational negative effects of apartheid.

Paying tribute to Mandela during his State of the Nation Address to parliament, Ramaphosa said, and I quote:

*“We are continuing the long walk he began, to build a society in which all may be free, in which all may be equal before the law and in which all may share in the wealth of our land and have a better life.”*

*“We are building a country where a person’s prospects are determined by their own initiative and hard work, and not by the colour of their skin, place of birth, gender, language or income of their parents.”*

*“We are one people, committed to work together to find jobs for our youth; to build factories and roads, houses and clinics; to prepare our children for a world of change and progress; to build cities and towns where families may be safe, productive and content.” “We remain a highly unequal society, in which poverty and prosperity are still defined by race and gender, close quote.*

Today’s launch of the Artisan programme is living proof that the ANC led government is an active agent of change in our community. On a previous occasion, during the most recent EXCO Outreach we visited Van Zylsrus, Dithakong, Sedibeng; the Premier and the Members of the Executive Council listened to the community’s concerns and today we are responding to them.

Although reports suggest that there is a slight drop in the unemployment rate in the province, the unemployment rate remains high. A summary of the labour market in the Northern Cape for October to December 2017 reflects an unemployment rate of 27.1 percent, an expanded unemployment rate of 40.5 percent, an absorption rate of 40.7 percent and a labour force participation rate of 55.9 percent. These figures released by

Statistics SA; prove that much intervention is needed to fight the scourge of poverty and unemployment in the province.

## **THE PROGRAMME**

As the MEC of the Department, I must highlight that we take youth development very seriously; hence we continue to make strides through the successful implementation of such programmes.

The late Nelson Mandela stated, and I quote:

*“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world” and “Young people must take it upon themselves to ensure that they obtain the highest education possible so that they can represent us well as future leaders,”* close quote.

Through the Artisan Construction Programme we are training youth, and afford learners an opportunity to make an impact in their community. I encourage you to further develop yourself. Nothing stops you from becoming an engineer or starting your own business. South Africa needs young people that will create jobs.

It serves me well to know that all 160 of the learners are youth. Obtaining a qualification, being absorbed in the formal labour market and earning a salary; is but merely the first steps in your journey towards economic participation; progressing towards the ultimate goal of economic freedom.

The training of the 160 learners will commence during October 2018 (next month) of which 60 learners will study to become Electricians and 100 learners to become Plumbers. Upon Completion of the Plumbing Artisanhip Programme learners will receive a qualification equivalent to NQF Level 4 and upon Completion of the Electrical Artisanhip Programme learners will receive a qualification equivalent to NQF Level 3. Upon exit, the learners will be qualified Electricians and Plumbers with a red seal.

According to the Back to Basics campaign municipalities are tasked with the responsibility to:

Ensure infrastructure maintenance and repairs to reduce losses with respect to:

- Water and sanitation.
- Human Settlements.
- Electricity.
- Waste Management.
- Roads.
- Public Transportation.

Upon the learners' completion of the training, they will be placed at municipalities and contracting companies; playing a significant role as part of the Back to Basics Programme to reduce wastages of water and electricity, positively contributing to the saving of municipal funds. This programme will provide learners of the most rural areas the opportunity to get a better job, a better workplace, better security and to reduce poverty in our communities.

Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to acknowledge our fellow stakeholders the Northern Cape Rural Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College as the training provider, Construction CETA who is the funding partner for their contributions in making young people's dream come true. The department played an important role in terms of the provisioning of Protective Clothing and on the job training and will partner with the municipality in terms of the facilitation of the work placement of the learners. More of these joint ventures are needed to fight the scourge of poverty and to develop qualified and working youth which is the gateway to a growing economy. Through this programme various relationships will be established amongst stakeholders to develop more of these initiatives and to liaise with the different communities across the entire province consequently presenting more opportunities to the youth.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, to those enrolled in the Artisan Construction Programme my message is clear: Ensure that you always give and do your best! You have a responsibility towards

yourself and the stakeholders, namely to ensure that you successfully complete this programme.

Ahmed Kathrada, an anti-apartheid activist who was jailed on Robben Island stated and I quote: *“I know she is the mother of the nation, but personally I grew up under Walter and Mama from the 40’s and I have always regarded them as part of my family. Politically she was a great humanitarian, a great comrade, a loving comrade and an inspiration. She never ever gave up!”*

In the spirit of the late Ma Sisulu, I wish to make an appeal to all the female learners: Do not drop out of this program, or waste this opportunity, always remember and think of those ones who applied, but unfortunately they were not successful. This programme is another of government’s initiatives, giving hope to a brighter future and a better life for our young people. Your future is in your hands!

I thank you!

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