

SPEAKER NOTES FOR THE HONOURABLE MXOLISA SOKATSHA ON THE OCCASION OF THE PHAKAMILE MABIJA GRADUATION AND LONG SERVICE AWARD CEREMONY

23 November 2017

Programme Director

Honourable MEC's present

Honourable Executive Mayor Buyiswa Ximba

Executive and Senior Management

Representatives from De Beers Technical Training Campus and the Mining houses: AfriSam,
Kimberley Mine, Blackrock Mine & Sishen

The Mabija Family Members

Recipients of our Long Service Awards and Graduates

Members of the media

Ladies and gentleman

Good evening, Goeie naand

INTRODUCTION

Programme Director, as South Africans we continue to celebrate the centenary of the life of Oliver Reginald Tambo, allow me to reflect on the legacy of this fallen hero for a moment. OR, as he was affectionately known in the movement; inspired generations of freedom fighters with his unwavering commitment to the liberation of our country, continent and all the oppressed people in the entire globe. The former President Thabo Mbeki described OR as follows and I quote:

"...OR was an intellectual in the best meaning of that word. He was a person of reason, a person of rational thought and rational action. It's a great ability, a great gift, that gift of reason. And I think it was central to OR's make-up and central to his behavior. With Oliver Tambo, you had a person who could deal with both the concrete and the abstract, the specific, the particular and the general; between tactics and strategy – that dialectal interaction, OR understood very well," close quote.

Like OR, many fallen heroes during the apartheid years dedicated their lives to a struggle that will bring about economic emancipation, freedom and democracy. One of these fallen heroes is the young Phakamile Mabija, known as an anti-Apartheid activist and a full-time youth worker in the Anglican Diocese of Kimberley. Phakamile had been detained, after an alleged stone-throwing incident in Vergenoeg Township. He was tortured in police custody and thrown from the 6th Floor of the Transvaal Police Station in Kimberley. Relatives were informed of his death on the 8th June 1977 with great pain shock and disbelief.

During the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Hearings, on 10 June 1996, Mrs Mabija stated the following and I quote:

“Phakamile was a very good child and he hated everything that was wrong. He was a person who was involved with the scouts and church activities and he was involved in everything. He was involved in everything, in all the church activities, at school, sports and he was a person who wanted the best and who was goal orientated and he committed himself in achieving his goals. He was a person who was a visionary who channelled all his energies to accomplish the best of things. He wanted success - he wanted the good things to succeed. He would say "I want a plan to succeed and when it succeeds it should benefit all". He always wanted his dreams to come true and be successful. Everything about him was so amazing because he was such a great person. And about the fact that he killed himself - that is not true - there is no such a thing like that,” close quote.

Graduates, may we draw strength from the character of this noble activist and fallen hero. I trust that one day this will be the legacy that we leave behind, that we may be remembered for our courage, success and determination. To the Mabija Family members, allow yourself to be proud that in the legacy of the late Phakamile Mabija young men and women are becoming economically independent and free through the obtaining of a qualification in an area of scarce skills, making them an asset for the labour market and contributors to the future and the economy of the country. Long live the legacy of Phakamile Mabija, long live!

Programme Director, the department implemented the Apprenticeship Programme in honour of a young man who sacrificed his life. To date the success in the Phakamile Mabija Apprenticeship Programme can be highlighted as follows: Since inception a total of 63 youth participated and 59 youth successfully completed the programme - 92 % of which 41% is

women. For the first intake 17 artisans graduated during July 2012. For the second intake 25 artisans graduated during November 2016. For this intake 16 learners were recruited and 16 artisans are graduating tonight. Ladies and gentlemen, at this point in time I am requesting all the graduates to please stand. I am proud to announce that this group, the Third Phakamile Mabija Apprenticeship, obtained a 100 % pass rate. Indeed you are making your family, government and the province proud! Congratulations on the completion of your trade, you have obtained a nationally and internationally recognised qualification. So, dream big, spread your wings and fly.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am proud to announce that the Public Sector Trainers Forum (PSTF) Achievers Excellence Award in the category of Excellent Individual Performance was conferred to Ms. Colleen De Nysschen, the NYS-Coordinator, on the evening of 17th October 2017 in the Gallagher Convention in Johannesburg. She received recognition for her significant contribution towards Youth Development Training of which the values and principles enshrined in the National Development Plan, Constitution, government legislatives and policy prescripts were implemented in her approach to expedite youth development. Congratulations and in the context of the high unemployment rate amongst youth may the department continue to excel and take youth development to a higher trajectory. In the same vein I would like to announce that the department is embarking on a 4th Phakamile Mabija Apprenticeship programme of which a total of 25 female will qualify in various trades and it will start during January 2018.

Furthermore, I acknowledge our partners, the four mining houses, namely: Sishen Mine, Kimberley Mine, Afrisam and Blackrock Mine, without your partnership and contribution this programme would not be a success. Blackrock Mine came on board with the 3rd Intake of the Artisan Programme that started during 2015.

Tonight we are also acknowledging nine officials who improved their qualifications in fields such as Public Management and Administration, Project Management, Governance and Political Transformation to Engineering, ranging from Diplomas' to Honours and Master's Degree. Of the nine officials, only three of them are women (33%). The department supports Women empowerment, but it is only able to grant opportunities if women show the necessary interest. I herewith encourage women to apply for bursaries, to invest in yourself and your future. As permanent officials working in the Public Sector, we should never think that we reached our

destiny and we “have arrived,” on the contrary we should embrace the concept of life-long learning, and continue to study, read and grow. Henry Ford, an American captain of industry and a business magnate, the founder of the Ford Motor Company, said and I quote:

“Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young. The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young,” close quote.

In addition, in the book *Drive*, the author Dan Pink argues that we need three things to feel motivated about, and satisfied with, our life, namely autonomy, mastery, and purpose. Becoming a lifelong learner fulfills all three of these psychological needs.

Programme Director, the Minister for the Public Service and Administration has in terms of Section 3(5) (a) and 5 (6) (b) of the Public Service Act made a determination that the cash award for the Long Service Recognition be revised and the amounts are as follows:

- For forty years continued service recipients received R 26 362
- For thirty years continued service recipients received R 19 771
- For twenty years continued service recipients received R 9 886
- Ten years continued service recipients received an increased annual leave entitlement.

Ladies and gentlemen tonight the department recognises, Mr. Piet September, who worked as a Senior Foreman at Griekwastad Roadcamp, for his 40 years of unbroken service in the Public Service. Thank you for your commitment and dedication to government. We value your years of experience and knowledge and we believe that you will share and pass it on to your fellow colleagues, who still faces several years in the administration. In the same vein, I need to highlight the importance of mentoring and the transfer of skills in the workplace. Not only does it give meaning to the humanitarian principle of Ubuntu, also stated as *‘Umuntu ngumuntu ngabanye abantu,’* but it also contributes to growth and multi-skilling of a workforce.

Nine officials have 30 years of unbroken service, 27 officials have 20 years of unbroken service and 17 officials have 10 years of unbroken service. Thank you for choosing the Public Service, may we continue to be diligent and dedicated workers who render services with effectiveness and efficiency.

This year we are saying goodbye fifteen colleagues as they are going on retirement. Over years you have invested your skills and imparted your knowledge in government and for this we thank you. Thank you for waking up early in the morning, stealing some of your weekend family-time to attend to your work, driving after sunset to projects or the guesthouse, because you left the office late. Your hard work and commitment is appreciated. I can assure you that the remaining workforce will continue to build on the foundations that you have laid. We trust that you will spend meaning full time with your spouse, children and grandchildren and continue to create pleasant memories as you have time at hand to make that one last dream come true. Enjoy your heard earned pension money wisely. Do not go through the motions of merely just existing on a daily basis, but live life to the fullest!

CONCLUSION

Allow me to conclude. When man reaches milestones in his or her life, either he obtains new meaning or searches for meaning. I would like to quote, Victor Frankl, an Austrian Neurologist and Psychiatrist as well as a Holocaust survivor and prisoner.

He said and I quote: *“Everything can be taken from a man, but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way. And there were always choices to make. Every day, every hour offered the opportunity to make a decision, which determined whether you would or would not submit to those powers which threatened to rob you of your very self, your inner freedom; which determined whether or not you would become the plaything of circumstance, renouncing freedom and dignity to become molded into the form of the typical inmate,”* close quote.

- As graduates and staff who improved our qualifications we choose what we will do with the knowledge that we have obtained –to use it, loose it or to share it.
- As retirees we choose whether we will live positively and still be an active role player in society or sit at home succumb to negative feelings of worthlessness.
- As partners in the private sector, against the backdrop of unemployment, poverty and inequality you have chosen to work together with government and change the economic landscape and the future of this province.

I thank you!

