



GAUTENG

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SPEECH

EULOGY BY PREMIER DAVID MAKHURA ON THE OCCASION OF THE FUNERAL SERVICE OF MEC FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, HON. THULISWA NKABINDE-KHAWE, VEREENIGING CIVIC CENTRE, SEDIBENG.

8 NOVEMBER 2019

Comrade Jacob Khawe, my Brother, Comrade and our Provincial Secretary;
The children, Mrs Nkabinde Senior, Mrs Khawe Senior;
The Khawe and Nkabinde Family;
Bishop Nkosi and other Members of the Clergy;
ANC Secretary General, Treasurer General and NEC members;
National leadership of SANCO;
ANCWL President and NEC of the League;
Provincial Leadership of the ANC, SACP, COSATU and SANCO;
Ministers and Deputy Ministers;
Premier of the Free State, MECs and Mayors;
Members of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures;
MMCs and Councillors;
Leaders of other political parties;
Chaplain of the SAPS and members of the Police Services;
Sechaba sa Sedibeng and the people of Gauteng at large;
Fellow mourners:

In early the evening of 01 November 2019, a dark cloud descended upon the Khawe and Nkabinde Family, the provincial government, the legislature the ANC-led Alliance and the entire province of Gauteng.

An immeasurable loss has been sustained and incalculable pain inflicted in the hearts of millions of the people of this province who saw MEC Thuli Nkabinde-Khawe as one of their own.

On behalf of the Provincial Government, the ANC and the Alliance, I would like to once more convey our deepest condolences to the family for the immeasurable loss sustained and incalculable pain inflicted in your hearts.

We too are hurting from this profound loss of one of the most capable and dependable grassroots organizers of our generation.

Even as we are reeling from the pain and shock of Cde Thuli's sudden departure, let us summon the courage to give testimony to the deeds of her life than be broken by the cruelty of death. She has answered the call of mortality.

Death reminds us that we are ordinary mortals who will never get used to the pain of losing a loved one.

But we also want to say that no victory in death. The victory is what we live for and leave behind as a legacy.

Bertel Brecht says do not fear death so much but rather the inadequate life.

As people of faith, we do believe that even death shall come to pass. Death shall die.

John Donne in his Holy Sonnets in saying: "Death, be not proud, though some may have called thee mighty and dreadful, we say though art not so...one short sleep past, we shall wake up eternally and death shall be no more because thou too shall die".

As freedom fighters, we have never feared death. This reason many of our comrades sang songs of freedom as they faced the gallows.

The issue is not whether we shall die or not but when we die what shall we be remembered for. So, there is no point in focusing on death. We must focus on how we live our lives.

Both Christians and Communists alike is not whether live such purposeful lives in the service of other human beings.

Mark Twain is said to have famously said: "let us endeavor to live in a such way that when we die even the undertaker will be sorry".

The Bible teaches us that the only way that we transition from a physical existence to a higher form of life is through death.

This is the reason we say a person has "passed on". This phrase "passing on" is not just a diplomatic or polite way of talking about death. It is a profound expression of a belief that you enter a new form of existence.

It is when someone has passed on that we are able to reflect on their life and appreciate their unique contribution to enriching our own lives and those of other human beings.

How will we remember Comrade Thuli Nkabinde-Khawe? Where does she sit in the roll call of many women and men who answered the call of history – the call to stand up and fight the evil system of apartheid?

Over the past seven days, many tributes have been paid and testimonies given about the life and legacy of our departed shero, Cde Thuli Nkabinde-Khawe.

Her comrades in SANCO testified that she joined the civic movement as a school-going girl child at the tender age of 16, in the late 1980s and went to display unparalleled depth with regard to organising skills and administrative abilities. In SANCO, she held various positions from being a PA and administrator to getting elected as the Johannesburg Deputy Regional Secretary and later Gauteng Provincial Secretary.

In the ANC and Alliance structures she was known as a dexterous administrator who worked quietly in the Secretariat Alliance to ensure that SANCO was a dependable ally that resisted all temptations to break away from the ANC-led Alliance.

In the Gauteng Provincial Legislature she was known as a loyal servant of the people and a dignified public representative who had an incredible work ethic and a single-minded ability to get things done. She earned respect from all and sundry as someone who was fair, principled and consistent in fighting for the rights of the poor and marginalised in communities.

Her passion was about getting down to work and directing her energy to action, instead of making long speeches and pontificating about problems.

Having worked with Thuli for two decades, I watched grow in leaps and bounds and gain confidence from being an administrator to taking charge of SANCO's often chaotic organisational machinery, with diligence, dignity serenity and strength.

Her interventions in the heated debates and robust engagement often calmed the waters. Her passion for the poor was somewhat legendary.

Perhaps the Book of Proverbs 31 verse 25 the scriptures captures the description of this gracious woman leader when it they say: "Strength and dignity are her clothing and she laughs at the time to come".

Today we celebrate the women's diligence, dignity, strength and serenity as great gifts that our revolution requires.

It is these qualities that earned her a place in the ANC-led Executive Council of the sixth Administration.

Let me say with a clear conscience, that I motivated to the ANC Provincial Officials and Alliance Political Council why Thuli must be in provincial cabinet without any push from Cde Jacob or SANCO. She never had an entitlement mentality.

She never lobbied to be appointed into Cabinet, Legislature Office Bearer or Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee. She just did her work with illuminating dignity, diligence, serenity and strength.

It is this illuminating dignity, diligence, serenity and strength that I saw when I visited her in hospital on 30 October, after the meeting of the Executive Council.

Even as she was lying on her hospital bed, she remained deeply concerned about cooperatives and NPOs that must get support from the department; the elderly who must be supported with programmes so that they can age with dignity; the girl children who must be supported with dignity packs so that they can complete school; victims and survivors of gender-based violence who must be supported to rebuild their lives and people with disability who must be integrated into the mainstream of the economy.

As I briefed her about some of the important decisions the Executive Council has taken about her Department, she nodded in agreement, gave a thumbs up, held her hands together and said thank you. She was relieved. She held my hand firmly in approval about the Exco decisions.

The previous week, I had met her with the MEC for Finance to discuss how we are going to urgently resolve some of the intractable procurement problems that have led to underspending and failure to support the cooperatives as well as corruption in the Department.

She was determined to run clean governance. She was also determined to ensure that decisions are made swiftly to protect and safeguard the interests of the poor.

Our dear Sister and Comrade, was a wonderful mother to her children and outstanding wife to his husband, cde JK. She brought warm and a great sense of security into the Khawe and Nkabinde family.

She was a Prayer Warrior and a fervent Christian who combined worship with hardwork. Above all, she was a champion of the poor.

As a SANCO activist, she mobilised citizens to participate in shaping their own development agenda.

As a community activist and a member of the provincial legislature and a member of the Gauteng Executive Council, she fought for all citizens to have equal access to services and they must be treated courteously.

MEC Thuliswa believed that citizens were entitled to full, accurate information and that they should know how decisions are made and departments are run.

She truly embraced openness, transparency and accountability as well as value for money in service delivery and development programmes and projects.

The Social Development portfolio was a perfect fit for someone like her, who worked in the care economy sector and understood community development challenges so deeply. I couldn't think of anyone who will this job better than her.

Comrade and Compatriots, we can sum up by saying that today we are bidding farewell to a cadre who displayed some of the finest qualities of leadership.

How do we honour someone of her calibre? How do we take forward her legacy?

We must do several things to honour her legacy.

We must pledge that as long as we live, the struggle for radical socioeconomic transformation will continue until we give dignity to all our fellow citizens who still live in conditions of squalor in informal settlements.

We pledge that as long as we live, the struggle to build a better Africa and better world will continue until peace, justice, equality and sustainable development is the order of the day and the new normal.

We will honour her by cleaning up the government of any corrupt and incompetent people who enrich themselves with the money that is meant to serve the poor and marginalised.

Comrade Thuli, I make a commitment before you that we will clean the Department of Social Development of all crooks and scoundrels and lazy officials who make it difficult for this Department to fulfil its developmental mandate of serving the poor and marginalised and spending its budgets.

We will honour you my MEC by ensuring that the Gauteng Executive Council and its administration remain true to the values and the principles of Batho Pele.

In keeping her memory alive, we will name award for the Best Public Servant, Best Performing Social Cluster Department, Best NPO and Community Development Project in Gauteng after her.

Perhaps most importantly, we will implement all the plans she had started during her first 5 months as the MEC for Social Development.

She wanted to eliminate urban poverty and hunger.

She wanted to change the lives of the children in conflict with the law. She never understood why we had street children.

She couldn't rest and as a result, she said to me and EXCO colleague especially the MEC for Community Safety, we must remove these children from the streets and ensure that all of them grow up in safe and secure family environments that will enable them to become productive and responsible citizens.

She fought against gender-based violence and worked tirelessly to promote safety for women and children. She argued that we needed to build more of such facilities across the five corridors.

Her plans including a new approach in dealing with NPOs, including the adoption of the strategy on the care economy. MEC Thuliswa Nkabinde-Khawe, the plans you had shall be realised.

We will honour by making sure that we implement our plan, Growing Gauteng Together, GGT2030, by implementing the following:

- Redirecting major infrastructure projects and investment initiatives to revitalise the economies of the two most under-developed and poorest districts in Gauteng – Sedibeng and West Rand – and establish Special Economic Zones over the next five years. Our plans are already at an advanced stage. Of course, we are driving this SEZ agenda in all corridors.
- Implementing single-window urban poverty and hunger strategy, aimed at eliminating and attacking poverty by 2030, because we want a Gauteng where no one goes to bed hungry.
- Expanding food security programmes to reach 2 million food-insecure people across the province.
- Registering ECD facilities to ensure that they adhere to norms and standards as set out in legislation and train ECD practitioners to enable better care of children and as part of implementing the reading for the meaning programme. Will also provide financial support to 1700 Early Childhood Development centres to reach 200 000 more children over the next five years.
- Expanding and upscaling the welfare-to-work programme to reach 100 000 young women.
- Expanding the Girl Child Programme, make sure that no young Girl stays at home because they don't sanitary towels among others, by distributing 7 million dignity packs to girl learners.
- Continuing the school uniform programme to reach 1 million learners from all poor households.
- Galvanising the Social Movement against drugs in all our communities.
- Through Okae Molao, combating gender-based violence and upscaling crime prevention through the provision of prevention programmes to vulnerable groups, psychosocial support to victims of crime, women and children and diversion programmes to children in conflict with the law.
- Building safer communities with an emphasis on reduction of Crimes against Women and Children; Trio Crimes (Carjacking, House Robbery and Business Robbery) & Cash in Transit; (CIT) Murder (Inclusive of Taxi Violence); Proliferation of Firearms, Liquor, Drugs & Gangsterism; Illegal Immigration; Illicit Economy & Ferrous and Non-ferrous Metal Theft and Corruption.

To the organisations to which Cde Thuli belonged, we must honour her memory by ensuring that we return the fundamental necessity of quality rather than quantity. We need quality of members, quality of leaders, quality of policies and quality action. Without good quality, we cannot make revolutionary progress at a desired pace.

We must honour her by continuing to unite the Alliance in Gauteng. The unity of the Alliance was something she would never compromise even when she was not appointed to Cabinet.

We must honour by rebuilding and uniting SANCO, Umbutho wa Bahlali.

We must honour by uniting and rebuilding the ANC and Alliance in Sedibeng, the region that became her home of choice after she married Cde Jacob Khawe.

We must honour her by rebuilding the economies of the Vaal and West Rand, the poorest regions of our province.

To the children of our MEC, we say please draw strength and solace from the knowledge that your Mother gave you the best when she was still around. And she gave her best to the people of our country.

I pray to God that He gives you the strength to survive this moment of deep pain and deprivation of your source of love, security and comfort. God has called her back to where she came from because she ran her race and kept her faith.

When you stumble and find yourselves in trouble and you think you cannot go on, remember that she wants you to succeed, she wants you to be the best you can be.

To Comrade Jacob, our Provincial Secretary, our Comrade and Brother. Over the last two weeks you and I became very close. We spoke for many hours, every morning and afternoon talking about Thuli being unwell. When she passed on, we cried together.

I want you to know that we are here for you. Be strong my Brother and Comrade. We are all here to give support. It is tough and it will be tough, but rest assured, we will support you and allow you space to heal these deep wounds.

To Thuli's Mother and Mother-in-Law, we know you are heartbroken. But we also know that as African mothers you will carry this pain with great dignity and serenity as our mothers. May God give you the strength to hold these two families together and mourn her passing with dignity and serenity.

MEC Thuliswa Nkabinde-Khawe, history will remember you as someone who dedicated her life to the most sacred and most sublime of all causes: the liberation of women and the fight for a better life for the poor and urban under-class.

You have lived such a life full of service to humanity that even the undertaker is sorry.

We pledge to you that we will not rest until we achieve the dream of a better life for all. We will rest until all women and children are safe and empowered.

Farewell Servant of the People. Hamba kahle Mbokodo! Sohlala siku khumbula.

Thank you.