

**SPEECH PRESENTED BY MEC SH NTOMBELA AT
THE 2016 GOVAN MBEKI AWARDS**

22 SEPTEMBER 2016

**THE GOVAN MBEKI AWARDS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE 60th YEAR
OF THE 1956 WOMEN'S MARCH AGAINST PASS LAWS**

Honourable Premier in his absence,

Honourable MECs

Mayors and Speakers

Chairperson of the Free State House of Traditional Leaders

Deputy Chairperson of the Free State House of Traditional Leaders

Directors General

Heads of Department

Deputy Directors General

Municipal Managers

Our Partners from Housing Support Organisations

Our Stakeholders in the Human Settlements value chain

Executive and Senior Managers from various government departments

Representatives from private sector

Contractors

Distinguished Guests

Honourable Premier in absentia, esteemed guests and fellow stakeholders in human settlements, this year we hold the Govan Mbeki Awards in the context of the 60th Year of the 1956 Women's March against pass laws as part of the overall struggle for our freedom. These are 60 years that include part of an immensely challenging and demanding journey, one that has cost some of us ALL THAT THEY HAVE; THEIR LIVES!

These years have also been years of great achievement built through common vision and purpose, as we sought to build the future we aspired to have. We celebrate these years in awe and wonder as we appreciate the struggle heroes that have gone before us, and whose greatness we strive to emulate as we carry their baton. We raise our flags to the women of 1956, and those that went after them and actively fought and still fight for the rights of women. Alongside these women were men who also held the other side of the battle for our freedom.

At this point we site the Govan Mbeki generation and fellow struggle icons for their clarity of vision, determination and unwavering persistence which they shared as they rallied together and fought for a free South Africa. This vision was succinctly encapsulated in the 10 principles of the Freedom Charter of which we celebrated 60 years last year. The essence of the Freedom Charter, which also includes the rights of women, is **the right to be; the right to live in peace and freedom, and the right to self actualisation of the highest worth.**

Much as human settlements development directly addresses the principle: 'There shall be houses, security and comfort,' the development of human

settlements addresses all development and sustainability issues. Through human settlements development we address other key needs that make up the development of individuals, of families, of communities and society. Ladies and gentlemen, women emancipation is critical to social development. In Nelson Mandela's words: "Freedom cannot be achieved unless women are fully emancipated."

That said, and turning our focus on the awards as part of development with the theme "Together, building the future today" we cannot miss the value of partnerships in ensuring development and sustainability in human settlements. This partnership includes women and their development. The Free State is a participant in the programme that specifically targets women contractors, the 1956 Women Contractors Programme for building 1956 houses. This programme stipulates that 30% of the human settlements grant budget be allocated to women contractors.

Our programmes also target the quest to provide 1.5 million houses by 2019 as set by the national Department of Human Settlements. This can be achieved through sustainable partnerships as we seek to change for the better, the lives on 1.5 million families.

We have come a long way in working towards achieving our Outcome 8 mandate; Sustainable Human Settlements and Improved Quality of Household Life. Core to this mandate is the ultimate goal of government to create a nation housed in decent homes. Freedom is not complete without a HOME. Humanity too, is incomplete without a home, for a home is the basis for a better and productive life. As the Free State Province, we are proud to say that we have

come a long way in working towards the vision of Govan Mbeki. The journey has been long and challenging and yet rewarding.

Our National Development Plan describes the context of Human Settlements Development in South Africa as follows:

*'The inefficiencies and inequities in South Africa's settlement patterns are deeply entrenched as apartheid left a terrible spatial legacy. **Where people live and work matters.** Apartheid planning consigned the majority of South Africans to places far away from work, where services could not be sustained, and where it was difficult to access the benefits of society and participate fully in the economy. Towns and cities are highly fragmented imposing high costs on households and the economy.'*

We are using human settlements development to undo this and many related legacies born of poor habitats for humanity. The Free State province has provided homes to over 200 000 families. In its quest to provide sustainable human settlements, the province, under the leadership of a visionary, our very able and determined Premier, Honourable Magashule, explored various means of ensuring that we optimise our subsidies to provide better homes; homes that give back our people their dignity, homes that they too can come home to. These include outstanding homes for farm workers, rebuilt 2 rooms, institutional houses and alternative rental accommodation to name a few.

This is our contribution to this land and our people - providing a foundation and building block on which the intrinsic worth of our people is based; ensuring that today we have individuals, and tomorrow we **WILL** have communities and nations. This is also our contribution to Women Empowerment and liberation, to the Freedom Charter, the Millennium Development Goals and Habitat

Agenda Principles - for we are a nation born of visionaries and seek to create a better life for all.

Viva Govan Mbeki, Viva Epainette Mbeki, Viva Walter Sisulu, Viva Albertina Luthuli, Viva **Zachariah Keodirelang "ZK" Matthews - the architect of the Freedom charter**, Viva Lillian Ngoyi, one of the leaders of the 1956 Women's March. Viva the women of today who continue to carry the hope of many South African women. May your souls relish this moment, as you witness our effort and race run to completion in fulfilment of your dream; the dream to bring the African child home, of giving back their dignity!

Our progress in human settlements development could have yielded far more to date. Over the years, our progress has been hindered by notable challenges associated with traversing new territory i.e. providing free housing and partially subsidised houses. We still have incomplete housing projects, which we are hard at work to complete while building new ones. We have also gone back to rectify some houses such as the 2 and 1 room houses which have robbed our people of their dignity. This is work in progress, work which we are determined to complete over time and in phases.

We are ensuring that we too, do our part in fulfilling the promise of those before us as they gathered in Kliptown, on 26 June **1955**, and in unison we shouted: There shall be houses, security and comfort.

We are gathered here today to celebrate this achievement and to aspire to achieve more. The Govan Mbeki Awards are some of the tools of acknowledgement and form of encouragement for the stakeholders in the human settlements value chain to continue **BUILDING THE FUTURE TODAY, TOGETHER.**

It is up to us to ensure that this race, which has been run prior to and intensified in 1913 when the African National Congress' liberation efforts were entrenched, is run to its full fruition. We are the generation that is entrusted with ascertaining achievement of this desired future, and we dare not fail those whose blood flows in the veins of our earth and country to our benefit.

Ladies and gentlemen, comrades and friends, this is a brief overview of human settlements development towards the achievement of the goal of providing homes as was espoused in the Freedom Charter in 1955, and later entrenched in our Constitution in the Human Rights. We are walking in the shoes of our struggle icon and hero, Ntate Govan Mbeki, and working towards realising his dream and impassioned plea of a decent home for all.

Esteemed guests let me draw your attention to the fact that we may not have reached all of our people; however, we have made a mark in the lives of many. **INDEED RE YA HLASELA, WE DELIVER.**

I have told this story before, and I will tell it many times over:

Ask a woman who raised her children in a two-room house in Putswastene, in Henneman, in Phelindaba, in Heidedal, in Bluegum Bosch, in Tumahole, and elsewhere in the province and she will tell you the story! Close your eyes and visualise a family of six or more, grandfathers and grandchildren in a two room house with a bucket outside for a toilet; and they will tell you just how much of a difference the houses built for them by this visionary government has made.

You do not need to be Einstein to visualise this. We have indeed made a difference. The Free State has undoubtedly a good story to tell, and so shall it

be told for generations to come. The impact made by our homes today, will go a long way into posterity in realisation of the dream of our struggle heroes and heroines; the fathers and mothers of our nation who are now our ancestors whose flare of hope WE WILL KEEP BURNING.

Let the spirit of Govan Mbeki look at us today with pride. Let all the ancestors of our African National Congress rally around us as we steer this ship to a land we all aspire to have – a South Africa which is prosperous, peaceful and treats its entire people equally to nurture them to an even better future.

Viva Govan Mbeki Viva!

I thank you.