



**Keynote Address by the Sedibeng District Municipality Executive Mayor, Cllr. Mahole Simon Mofokeng on the occasion of the Annual New Year's Celebration with the Survivors and Families of the Victims of Protest Actions in the District held at the Vaal Teknorama in Vereeniging on the 01 January 2010, in Sedibeng**

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**Programme Director, Cllr Sello Pitso**

**Bishop Zondo and his wife from Rivers of Living Waters**

**Reverend Musa**

**Reverend Moerane**

**Pastor Lebusa and all Religious Leaders here present**

**The Leadership of the ANC Youth League here present**

**Chairman of Khulumani Support Group**

**Members of the Regional Office Bearers here present**

**Fellow Councillors here present**

**Officials of Sedibeng District Municipality here present**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

## Distinguished Guests

Ke le dumedisa bohle ka ditumediso tse tswang Masepaleng wa Lebatowa wa Sedibeng. Ke ikutlwa kena le thabo le morolo ho eba lelona moketeng oona wa kajeno. Morolo le thabo ena e kgapatsehang, etliswa ke tlotla le tlhompheo eo le etlisang horona rele Masepala wa Lebatowa, hore ka letsatsi lena la pele selemong,

moo le kabeng leena le bankalona le bile leena le balelapa, la itela hoba kwano mona lerona. Katseo tsohle kea leboha. Allow me to thank Bishop Zondo who gave us a warm welcome on the occasion of the opening of the Cathedral of the Rivers of the Living waters. We can now safely say that Evaton is a City. We can never say our appreciation enough for the very warm relationship that the Sedibeng District Council enjoys with the Religious Sector, and Bishop Zondo deserves our praises in this regard.

## Bahale-Mahlatsipa

Programme Director, the great measure of a nation is the manner in which it treats and affords respect to its heroes, to that end, we need to ask ourselves as the Sedibeng District Municipality: Who are our heroes?

Do we give them the respect and honor that they should be getting? The answer to that is clear, we in Sedibeng District Municipality are doing the best we can, we will together with our heroes do more, for indeed, we don't do anything for our heroes without their involvement.

One needs only to look at the number of meetings we have held with the heroes in various forms. I know that we have held no less than twelve meetings with the Khulumani Support Group last year alone. That translates into no less than a meeting a month. We have met with the leadership of MKMVA no less than four times last year, and held a successful workshop which developed a very intensive District Policy on Veterans, which is helping to guide both the National and Provincial Government Policies which are not yet developed.

Programme Director, allow me to go a little into the history of this beautiful District we all call home, to paint the picture that we all choose not to see. The tree of freedom is watered by the blood of heroes and martyrs; we learned that truth very well.

As the negotiations in 1992 at Kempton-park were fast going into a stalemate, the issue being whether we will have a Unitary,

Non-Racial and Non-sexist South Africa or a Federal South Africa, with pockets of Afrikaner states in the North West, Free State, an English corner in the Eastern Cape, a Zulu Kingdom in KZN.

When the racists Afrikaners failed to make an impact in North West, trying to create a diversion in the then Bophuthatswana, when attacks on trains in Gauteng could not assist in making the Nationalist to move an inch, on that fateful night of the 17<sup>th</sup> June 1984, where all of you were exposed to the evil forces of darkness and the ugly child of apartheid heresy, the whole world and the entire country understood why we had to have a United South Africa, non-racial and non-sexist in character and form. All of you paid a very dear price.

The African National Congress, suspended talks, the National Party withdrew its demands for a federal state, the country was quick to move into real talks. It was after the full might of the apartheid might was visited on the country between 1955 and 1960, where African communities were beaten into submission, heroes were born and bred in Sharpeville, to rise up in unison, telling the world that we can no longer tolerate oppression.

With the banning of both the ANC and the PAC, the lull in the country was deafening, Soweto uprisings came and went, then the watershed 1984 Vaal Rent Boycott arrived. The impact was able to wake up the spirit of freedom throughout the entire country in a manner that was never thought possible. The entire country was on fire, from Cape Town to Musina, from Durban to

Kimberly, every township and hamlet said in one word: If the Vaal can do it, so can we.

Clr Pitso, even when the full might of the apartheid army was unleashed in our townships for the first time, our heroes here present refused to be silenced. Who can forget Operation Palmiet on that fateful morning when our communities woke up to find the army at every street corner in the entire Vaal area, over 20 000 SADF army personnel were deployed.

Our District, Programme Director and colleagues, led the campaign to make the country un-governable, the fact that we have a very vibrant MKMVA core in Sedibeng District Municipality indicates that we provided the ANC with very great numbers of young cadres.

It is therefore no surprise that former State President, Nelson Mandela, named the District, “The Cradle of Human Rights Struggle”. For that we are grateful to all of you here present. The nation cares and appreciates. We can never say thank you enough. You are our heroes, Sedibeng District Municipality is made great by you all conquering deeds, it is on your shoulders we stand tall, it is on the shoulders of giants like you, that we are able to see far into the future. This is so as we push forward to the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Sharpeville Massacre this year.

Programme Director, our District Municipality takes this opportunity to thank the heroes here present for the great support in the National elections held last year, their continued support in payment of their rates and taxes. We will continue to look for land in the District to build churches and foster care homes for the aged. We will continue to engage with all of you to guide us in everything we do.

I also take this opportunity to apologize for the delay of the trip to Namibia of the Khulumani Support Group branch of Boipatong. We will be taking 70 members of Boipatong to Cape Town on the 11<sup>th</sup> of February this year to coincide with the opening of parliament.

I commit my Municipality to this programme of appreciation of our heroes for as long as I lead this beautiful District. I am looking forward to the day when Khulumani shall be providing catering services for these events to raise funds for your activities, I cannot wait to see the day when you are part of the many service providers that offer quality services to the District and its people. I commit my office to guide and assist to bring you to that level of competency. We hope you will rise up to this challenge.

Programme Director and fellow, I am looking forward to continued engagement with all of you in this new year, our engagements needs to be

intensified as we move to bring about the 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Commemoration of Sharpeville Massacre, an event we hope will meet and exceed your expectations. We hope that you will be as proud of our African Festival geared to show case your heroic deeds as we are of you.

Programme Director, with the powers vested in me by the people of Sedibeng and the African National Congress, I declare these celebrations open and take this opportunity, the MKMVA and Khulumani Support Group, our heroes, to partake of the humble offerings of our appreciation.

I wish you all a prosperous New Year, May all you wishes and dreams come true this year.

I Thank You.