



The Sedibeng District Municipality Executive Mayor, Cllr. Mahole Simon Mofokeng receiving the State President on the occasion of the unveiling of the Tombstone of Bavumile Vilakazi in Sedibeng, Johannesburg, Saturday, 06 August 2011

Programme Director;

Honourable State President Jacob Zuma;

The Vilakazi Family & relatives

Distinguished guests

The people of Sedibeng and those coming from our neighbouring and far way places.

Friends, colleagues and comrades, we are gathered here today to place a stone of remembrance for a stalwart and leader of the community of Sedibeng and South Africa, His Excellency, Comrade Bavumile H. Vilakazi - a freedom fighter, community leader and former Delmas treason trialist.

A leader of the United Democratic Front, the former Executive Mayor of the now Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Council, former ANC Provincial Chairperson, and former Ambassador to Uganda. So great accolades to a great man, there is none more deserving.

My task here is simple yet a difficult one, to announce and present a leader and father we most look up to for guidance. A leader who when the economies of the world were tumbling like dominoes as a result of the worldwide recession the likes of which have never been seen, led South Africa through the storm to deliver us on a growth path to economic stability.

Among the many heritage and historic memoirs behind his name, President Zuma demonstrated his distinguished leadership capabilities, particularly by bringing peace and stability in KwaZulu-Natal, the province that was most notorious for what others referred to as "black on black violence" prior to our democratic elections in 1994.

Consequently, he was awarded with the Nelson Mandela Award for Outstanding Leadership in Washington DC, in 1998, mainly because of his leadership role as Chairperson of the ANC of the Southern Natal Region, a position he assumed at the inaugural regional conference in 1990.

This was in recognition of his immense leadership skills spanning decades that during his tenure as South Africa's Deputy President saw him assuming the role of mediator in the difficult Burundi negotiations process.

In assuming the role of mediator he was filling the great shoes of the late former Tanzanian President Julius Mwalimu Nyerere and later those of South Africa's former President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. The trouble in the Great Lakes of Africa in Burundi sounds like a bad dream today, peace and stability is the order of the day. The world would not have imagined any peace in that Region. Thanks to the son of Africa, the peacemaker of note, our one and only, President Jacob Zuma.

Following our first national general elections in 1994, he was appointed Member of the Executive Committee (MEC) in the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government, responsible for Economic Affairs and Tourism. In 1997, he was elected Deputy President of the ruling party, the ANC, and later appointed Deputy President of our country following the 1999 national general elections.

At the last ANC National Conference in 2007, he was elected President of the ruling party, the African National Congress, and later elected President of the Republic of South Africa, following the 2009 national general elections. There are many leadership roles he undertook, but due to time constraints I will not mention all of them.

An international poll in January 2010 placed this son of the soil, the most popular president in the world ahead of President Barack Obama of the United States of America, and we agree. He who led the country through world- wide recession, the like of which we have never seen. In him as the father of this young nation, lies the hope and bright future of South Africa and the entire continent of Africa. For without his sterling leadership, agreement on climate change talks in Copenhagen would not have been possible last year. We will look up to him again to lead us through Climate Change talks in Durban this year.

In conclusion, I want to use this opportunity to remind the President that this is his home, as we wish this is not the last time he visits us. With these few words, it is indeed privilege and great honour to welcome and receive the State President of the Republic of South Africa on the podium, President

Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma. He is affectionately known by his clan names as "Nxamalala" or "Msholoji".

I thank you!