

**ADDRESS BY THE PREMIER OF GAUTENG, HONOURABLE DAVID MAKHURA,
AT THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.**

3 December 2015

Programme Director,

Deputy Minister of Social Development, Hon Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu;

Acting Mayor, Member of the Mayoral Committee Yolanda Mabusela and Member of the Mayoral Committee Nozipho Makeke;

Commissioner Nomasonto Mazibuko;

Director General of our province, Deputy Director General of National Social Development and Head Of Department of Gauteng Social Development;

The leadership of the Gauteng Disability Rights Forum and SA Disability Alliance;

The people of Gauteng:

We meet here today, in Tshwane, on International Day of Disabled Persons, once again to renew our commitment to continue addressing in a comprehensive way the plight of people with disabilities. Last year, we celebrated this day in Mogale City, in Munsieville.

On this important day, we once more declare that people with disabilities have human rights; that they have capabilities and talents that can help move our province, our country, our continent and the entire world forward. It is for this reason that to have a disability is to be differently able. To have a disability doesn't have to disable your talent and purpose in life.

On this special day, we acknowledge the important role played by people with disabilities, along-side other compatriots, to enrich our cultural, social, economic and political life. We today celebrate the achievements of people with disabilities in our society and we once more commit to doing everything necessary, working together with them, to create the necessary conditions and an enabling environment for them to live fulfilling lives, to follow and reach their dreams and to unleash their full potential.

Our Provincial Government's theme for today and this year's Disability Rights Awareness Month is: *"Celebrating the role of people with disabilities in the struggle for liberation and their inclusion in the Transformation, Modernization and Re-industrialisation of the Gauteng City Region"*

So we are here to make history with you today, as this is the largest gathering of people with disabilities to ever gather at the Union Buildings!

We are here to celebrate the role of people with disabilities in the struggle for liberation and to recommit ourselves to their inclusion in our programme for radical Transformation, Modernisation and Reindustrialisation.

As this is the year of the 60th Anniversary of the Freedom Charter, we are here to remind people with disabilities when our forebears declared that South Africa belongs to all who live in; that the people shall govern; that all shall be equal before law; that the people shall share in the country's wealth; that the doors of learning and culture shall be opened to all; that there shall be housing, security and comfort. People with disabilities are included in all these rights and freedoms guaranteed in the Freedom Charter and Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

Indeed, over many years, people with disabilities have shown a desire to take charge of their lives and determine their destiny, to be their own liberators and with their own hands to build for themselves sustainable livelihoods. They have lived up to the mantra that; *Nothing About Us, Without Us*.

On this day the Gauteng Provincial Government, wishes to assure all people with disabilities - our mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, children, nephews and nieces - that we share your dreams and your passion to contribute to the transformation development of our society.

In us you have a willing, able and reliable partner to make your dreams a reality. In us you have a government ready to walk side by side you towards the better future we all desire.

We know too well that one of the structural problems facing our economic is the limited participation of people with disabilities in the economic mainstream.

Accordingly, we are determined to ensure that people with disabilities become among the main drivers and primary beneficiaries of our programme to radically Transform, Modernize and Reindustrialize the Gauteng City Region. Specifically, we want more and more people with disabilities to be part of the economic mainstream and to benefit from our accelerated social transformation efforts.

We will continue to insist that people with disabilities must benefit from our interventions to promote urban agriculture, including agro-processing. As we industrialize Gauteng, and create new industries of the future, people with disabilities must also be afforded an opportunity to be makers of things that can be sold both in our country and in the world. You must be part of our ongoing efforts to boost manufacturing within the Gauteng City Region.

As we respond to the energy challenges facing our province, we expect enterprises with a significant representation of people with disabilities to benefit from the economic opportunities that will arise. As we build new post-apartheid cities and mega human settlements, universal access, also for people with disabilities will be taken into account. Our goal is to build human settlements that are inclusive of all sectors of our society including people with disabilities.

As we expand, modernize and integrate our public transport infrastructure, universal access must and will be taken into account. Indeed people with disabilities must be supported to take advantage and benefit from opportunities arising from Africa's new industrial revolution.

In order to take forward the theme of Celebrating the role of people with disabilities in the struggle for liberation the Office of the Premier entered into a partnership with the University of the Witwatersrand to hold an Annual Activism for Disability Rights Public Lecture and Disability Rights History Workshop in line with Gauteng's human rights approach to delivery to people with disabilities.

With the assistance of Justice Albie Sachs, the Disability Rights History Workshop made a written, oral and visual record of the South African history of the struggle for human and disability rights. The workshop also gave more academic legitimacy to the history of the struggle for disability rights as a critical body of knowledge that must be researched and taught.

The Annual Activism for Disability Rights Public Lecture began with a spirited welcome from Vice-Chancellor Habib. Justice Albie Sachs then shared what was different about being a comrade with a disability; both in the struggle for liberation and in the struggle for equality post 1994 to date. A panel of veteran activists with disabilities, then shared their stories and insights on the formation of the Disability Rights Movement in South Africa.

We count among the progress we are making in building a better Gauteng for people with disabilities the fact that:

- We continue to provide free health care to patients with disabilities who cannot afford it and have improved their independence and mobility by providing them with 63 000 assistive devices over the last five years. These include wheelchairs, walking aids, prostheses and hearing aids.
- The improved implementation of interventions to mitigate the effects of disablement, including interventions to detect disabilities at an early age and to provide interventions, including assistive devices to children as early as possible. This has had positive effects on their relevant cluster of departments for children with disabilities .
- Significant progress is being made in monitoring the inclusion of people with disabilities in all the services of the GPG The Performance Monitoring and Evaluation System of Gauteng uses a dashboard of key indicators and targets agreed to by the Executive Council to monitor performance on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis. This performance monitoring tool includes targets for delivery of core services of every department to people with different disabilities.
- Shifting from a medical model of disability to the social model and using a disability rights approach to programming.
- Establishment of co-ordination structures responsible for Disability Rights in all departments.
- Inclusion of delivery to people with disabilities of some of the core services of all Provincial Government departments.

As part of ensuring that people with disabilities benefit from the TMR we are pleased to report that this year to date, we have done business worth R 136 million with entrepreneurs with disabilities which is a massive improvement on the R 4,6 million worth of business we did last year.

In addition the supplier database of the Gauteng Department of Finance has 1,150 companies with ownership by entrepreneurs with disabilities is between 1% and 50% ownership and 125 with more than 51% ownership. This will ensure that entrepreneurs with disability benefit directly from our procurement policy.

As part of our modernisation of human settlements and urban development we can report that the percentage of houses that the Gauteng government built in the last financial year that were accessible for and allocated to people with disabilities was 38% of all houses that we built. We have exceeded the target of 30% for this indicator. These houses will be as close to all amenities as possible.

I would like to conclude the following highlights of partnerships with Disabled People South Africa:

- In partnership with Disabled People South Africa, our Department of Sports, Arts, Culture and Recreation ensures that all infrastructure improvements that they have a stake in results in meeting the standards to include people with disabilities.
- We have supported sportspersons with disabilities and that just keeps on producing champions.
- Wheelchair Tennis player Kgothatso Montjane has played so well locally and internationally that we had to award her the Gauteng Sportswoman with a disability of the year every single year from 2013 to 2015.
- Mr Lucas Sithole who won Gauteng Sportsman with a disability of the year in 2013 and 2014 for his prowess in Wheelchair Basketball went on to win the South African Sportsman of the Year with a Disability this year. His international wins at the the British, USA and Australian Open Wheelchair Tennis Tournaments has made us a proud sporting province.

Let us continue to strengthen these partnerships as we move the Gauteng City Region forward for the benefit of people with disabilities.

Thank you.