

SPEAKING NOTES PREPARED FOR THE PREMIER OF GAUTENG, DAVID MAKHURA, ON THE OCCASION OF THE AFRICA DAY CELEBRATIONS; JOHANNESBURG

25 May 2016

Programme Directors;

Chairperson of the African Diaspora Forum;

Excellencies, Ambassadors and High Commissioners;

Members of the Executive Council;

Councillors;

Representatives of civil society organisations;

Fellow Africans:

Thank you for joining us today as we celebrate Africa Day here in Yeoville, in the City of Joburg. The people of Yeoville live side by side as fellow Africans; struggle together to ensure that Yeoville is a community where local South Africans and African migrants live in peace and harmony. They join hands to fight drugs and other criminal activities that undermine social integration and community cohesion. Their children go to the same schools, play together and grow together. Businesspeople trade as equals and sell their products and services in a healthy competition and mutual respect.

I can proudly say that there is no xenophobia here in Yeoville and this community is a melting pot of diverse cultures and nationalities of South Africa and our continent.

On this Day, as Africans, we reassert and embrace firmly our African-ness. This is a Day in which we as Africans take pride in our common identity, celebrate that which unites us – our common heritage, our common ancestry – and recommit ourselves to a shared a prosperous future.

On this special day, we draw pride from being the children of this Continent of Africa, which has made a significant contribution in the origins of humankind, in human civilisation and, up to this day, in the development of humankind.

Today we are declaring boldly that we are Africans; we are one Africa; we are one humanity; we are the keepers of our African brothers and sisters from wherever they come from on Continent.

Collectively we are here to say; Africa is a home for all Africans. Africa is the cradle of humankind. None of our African brothers and sisters will be made to suffer in our name.

We are making a solemn pledge that we will continue to condemn acts of xenophobia and related intolerances. We will isolate those in our communities who perpetrate these acts. We will teach them the African ways of Ubuntu; that I am because you are.

Africa Day celebrations offer us an opportunity to forge closer ties with one another, as Africans, to build new and strengthen existing bonds of friends and solidarity.

Our presence here today seeks to strengthen efforts to promote African Unity and African solidarity. Our gathering here today is a reflection of our on-going commitment to the African Agenda, to the re-birth of our continent and to its continued prosperity.

We reiterate that the regeneration of Africa is still our dream, it is still part of our agenda and we are working towards its realisation. As we today celebrate Africa Day, we must also pay a special tribute to that generation of Pan Africanists and founding fathers of the Organisation of African Unity, now the African Union, who in their own wisdom laid a solid foundation for the unity and solidarity of Africans. They left us a proud legacy we must continue to defend and deepen.

We will always remember and draw courage from their sacrifices. We will endeavour to walk in their footsteps.

This year's Africa Day celebrations take place after I had the privilege, earlier this month to meet with more than hundred delegates representing African migrants from different countries in our continent to discuss the challenges they face as residents of Gauteng.

The meeting acknowledged the many challenges faced by migrants in our province. It reiterated that Gauteng remains the most welcoming and friendliest of all provinces with regard to making the stay of immigrants in South Africa more pleasant and productive.

The meeting appreciated that many immigrants are highly skilled and documented, they are not criminals and that they have chosen to come

to Gauteng cities to contribute to our success and enjoy a decent standard of living.

We emerged from the meeting clear in our minds that racism and xenophobia must be condemned and acted against firmly because they undermine both our common African identity and our common humanity.

We today, once more, state unambiguously that racism, xenophobia and all forms of intolerance have no place in our society. We say no to racism! We say no to xenophobia!

We will continue to work with the African Diaspora Forum to fight in particular, the scourge of xenophobia. This will be in addition to the work already done by our social cohesion advocates to engage different sectors of society on the twin problem of racism and xenophobia. This we will do as part of promoting social cohesion in our province, which for many years has been the melting pot of various cultures.

We, in Gauteng continue to view the diversity of cultures in our province as a source of strength rather than a source of weakness and division – it adds vibrancy to our province; it adds to the unique energy that Gauteng is renowned for; it adds to the resilience and strength that is so synonymous with Gauteng.

Part of what we must do in this regard is that we must promote the true integration of our continent, to facilitate trade, commerce, as well as the movement of people, goods and services across our cities and our countries.

We must build good infrastructure for economic development; we must invest in human capital and capabilities of our people; we must have quality leadership that cares about the wellbeing of their people.

We must encourage partnerships and intra-Africa trade and strong collaboration among businesses and governments at local, provincial and national level. The mayors and governors need to work together to promote and strengthen our economies and learn from one another.

Let our geographic borders not be a stumbling block to greater trade among ourselves, economic integration as well as to greater people to people contact between the peoples of our continent.

At all times we must act together, clear in the understanding that our future lies in our hands; that none but ourselves can build a better Africa and through that a Better World.

I wish all of you all a Happy Africa Day. God Bless Africa!

Thank you! Asante sana!