

**ADDRESS BY GAUTENG PREMIER DAVID MAKHURA AT THE LAUNCH OF
THE NATIONAL HERITAGE MONUMENT: GROENKLOOF NATURE RESERVE,
TSHWANE.**

15 September 2015

Programme Director, Mr Vuyo Jack;
Minister of Arts and Culture; Mr Nathi Mthethwa;
Deputy Minister Ms Thokozile Xasa;
MEC for Sports, Arts, Culture and Recreation, Ms Molebatsi Bopape;
Executive Mayor of the City of Tshwane, Cllr Kgosientsho Ramokgopa;
CEO of the National Heritage Council Adv Mancotywa;
Our Legendary musician, Mr Jonas Gwangwa;
Members of the Mayoral Committee;
Distinguished guests;
Ladies and Gentlemen:

Today we have come together at this historic site, in our historic Capital City during Heritage Month to bear witness to the launch of the National Heritage Monument which is a Mega Heritage Project that will profoundly transform our country's heritage landscape.

This launch takes five days after the unveiling of new humanlike fossils, Homo naledi, which were discovered by Wits University scientists at our historic Maropeng World Heritage Site. This new archeological evidence provides new insights that will continue to get us to rethink how our early ancestors lived three million years ago. That South Africa and the African continent are the Cradle of Humankind and Culture is corroborated by the existence of rich and unique fossil evidence. The history of the evolution of the Earth, the genesis of Life and Humanity is found in the vast expanse of the African landscape, especially in the South and East of the Continent. It is therefore correct that during the recent spate of xenophobic violence we rallied our people around the slogan: "We are Africa, We are One Humanity".

The launch of the National Heritage Monument and the celebration of the discovery of Homo Naledi are part of systematic and conscious effort to re-create a new and

inclusive narrative about what it means to be human and what it means to be African. We are confronting and intellectually challenging warped racist narratives about our history by celebrating our common humanity.

The National Heritage Monument will help us tell the South African story in its completeness and celebrate the rich galaxy of heroic and iconic men and women, in all their diversity, who have made distinct contributions to the most sacred and most sublime of all causes, the liberation of humankind.

The Constitution of our Republic enjoins us to honour all those who sacrificed and suffered for justice and freedom and to respect those who continue to work for the transformation of South Africa into a country of our dreams.

As we launch this National Heritage Monument, we invoke the eternal words of wisdom from Jose Marti, the father of the Cuban anti-colonial movement who said: *“A nation that honours its heroes, affirms itself.”*

When it is complete, National Heritage Monument will reflect our journey from the pre-colonial era, to the early wars of dispossession and to the liberation struggle in the 20th century; it will be a complex chronicle of our long walk to freedom; it will tell the story of many men and women who paid a supreme sacrifice to bring freedom in our land. Freedom was not free!

Any self-respecting nation uses all aspects of its past as an act of self-definition, self-knowledge, self-correction, self-propagation and self-preservation.

It is for this reason we must refuse to destroy the statues and symbols of apartheid and colonialism. We must preserve every aspect of our history, whether good or bad, so that future generations don't repeat the same mistakes. At the same time, we must create new symbols and monuments that represent the values and vision of a more humane and better South Africa that is more inclusive and unifying.

The preservation and promotion of our history and heritage also has major economic benefits with regard to the growth of tourism and hospitality, which are critical for employment creation.

Accordingly, building the National Heritage Monument and expanding the facilities at Maropeng World heritage site are worthy public investments.

We want to encourage our people to visit our heritage sites and monuments. We also want the world to visit our country and come to witness the many wonders of the world we have.

Any self-respecting nation and government will avoid the mistake of failing to invest in heritage resources as critical assets that must be preserved for future generations. The Gauteng Provincial Government and the people of Gauteng have identified heritage as one of the game changers of our programme for radical Transformation, Modernisation and Re-industrialisation of Gauteng.

Our National Development Plan requires that unlock value in our natural resources to benefits all our people. Our heritage is a resource whose value can only be unlocked through investing in mega projects and bold initiatives such as the National Heritage Monument. This is what radical social and economic transformation.

I would like to commend the National Government, especially Minister Nathi Mthethwa, for putting so much effort and energy in this project which seeks to radically transform our heritage landscape.

Further, I would like to commend Mayor Kgosientsho Ramokgopa and MEC Bopape for their dedicated support and focused attention on this project. The Capital City is destined to be a major tourist attraction as part of our vision to build a new economy in all our five development corridors of our Gauteng City Region.

Let us continue to use our heritage to unite our nation and move South Africa forward. We cannot fail! We dare not fail!

Thank you. Kea leboga! Ngiyabonga! Asante sana!