

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY GAUTENG PREMIER DAVID
MAKHURA AT THE FAITH BASED SECTOR SUMMIT.
TURFFONTEIN RACECOURSE, JOHANNESBURG.**

06 October 2015

Convenor of the Faith-Based Organisations, MEC Nandi
Mayathula-Khoza;

Co-Convenor and Deputy Chairperson of the Gauteng AIDS
Council, Reverend Gift Moerane;

MEC Barbara Creecy;

MMCS here present;

Regional Convenors of the Faith-Based Sector;

All Leaders of Faith-based organisations across Gauteng;

Moral Regeneration Movement Leadership;

Kgosi Kekana;

International guests from Nigeria;

Members of the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Kgotso ya Modimo ebe lelona. Ukuthula kube nani. Mulalo
uvhe navhone. Ku rhula kuve na hina. May peace be with you.
Shalom. Salaam maleikom.

I am very pleased to join on the second day of this ground-breaking Inaugural Faith-based Sector Summit in our province.

At the start of the term of office of the Fifth Administration in May 2014, I had lunch with Religious Leaders and made a promise that my administration is going to work very closely with leaders of faith-based organisations, so that we can tackle complex challenges facing our communities together.

Today's Summit and the many activities we have already undertaken together over the past sixteen months, are a faithful fulfillment of the promise and a reaffirmation of the central role of the religious sector in the struggle for freedom and ongoing transformation of our country.

When our forebears gathered at the Waaihoek Church in Mangaung in 1912 to establish what they referred to as the African Parliament, the South African National Natives Congress, they concluded the Conference by singing "*Lizalis'idinga lakho thixo Nkosi yenyano*"- Oh Lord of truth fulfill thy promise!

They did this in order to seek divine intervention as they were embarking on a long and arduous journey towards the

liberation of the people of South Africa, which was only achieved eight decades later.

Through the many difficult contours of our liberation struggle, we have always sought the guidance and comfort of our Redeemer, the one with many names, the one before whom many nations and religions bow in honour and praise – Modimo, Mudzimu, Nkulunkulu, God, Allah.

Today we gather to fulfill the promise of forging a united front between the Gauteng Provincial Government and the Gauteng Faith-Based Organisations so that together we can confront the many economic perils and complex social ills facing our democratic nation.

Just as we believed that the struggle for liberation would have not succeeded without the mobilization of all sectors of society to take a stand against apartheid, we believe the radical social and economic transformation of our country to create a just and caring society will not be possible without the active mobilization and participation of all sectors of society, particularly the leaders of Faith-Based Organisations, who are ostensibly the conscience of our nation.

We are therefore here to find common and practical ways of how together we can mobilise popular support and strengthen the implementation of our programme of radical Transformation, Modernization and Re-industrialization of Gauteng (TMR).

Programme Director, it is therefore fitting and proper that this Summit is convened under the theme: *“Gauteng Provincial Government and the Faith Based Sector, in partnership to take Gauteng Forward through the Transformation, Modernisation and Re-industrialisation.”*

As we have said many times, TMR is our provincial plan to implement the National Development Plan, Vision 2030. It is our road map towards the Gauteng of our dreams – A City Region that is socially cohesive, economically inclusive and ecologically sustainable; a cosmopolitan province in which we celebrate our unity in diversity and common heritage as human beings.

We are delighted that our bold vision and programme for radical Transformation, Modernization and Re-industrialization enjoys overwhelming support from different stakeholders in our province.

We trust that at the end of this Summit, the Gauteng faith-based fraternity too will have embraced our vision and that you will commit to putting your collective shoulder to the wheel towards its realisation.

Indeed we hope that this Summit will strengthen the multi-stakeholder consensus that already exists around the vision of Gauteng City Region and the TMR Programme.

Specifically, this Summit must help us emerge with a pragmatic Programme of Action that will ensure that we mobilise all our people in the Churches, Temples, Mosques, Synagogues, Prayer Halls and other places of worship in Gauteng, behind the objectives of the TMR.

This Summit must also help us to rally the faith-based community in our province to, once again, take a firm stand against persistent perils of poverty, inequality, unemployment and the ongoing exclusion of the overwhelming majority of God's people who live meaningless lives.

As leaders of the faith-based community, you must insist on the need to build a just and caring society where all the children of

God live in peace and harmony; a society in which each one of us is our brother and sister's keeper.

You must insist on the need to build a society free from all forms of corruption; you must be uncompromising on the need transparent, responsive, clean government that works with society and is active on the ground in communities at all times.

Let us work together to tackle social ills facing many communities across our province such as substance and drug abuse; rape and violence against women and children.

Let us join hands to improve the functioning of our schools, hospitals and police stations by ensuring that leaders of faith-based sector participate in community initiatives and campaigns to improve the wellbeing of our communities.

Let us work together to revitalize the township economy and ensure that many township-based businesses thrive and grow so that they can contribute to employment and economic empowerment of the majority.

We are fully aware and appreciate that most faith-based organisations and leaders are already involved in many developmental initiatives in our communities. Our immediate

task is to upscale these programmes to ensure that they reach more people.

Together, we must also ensure that these initiatives by the faith-based community contribute directly and meaningfully to our overall goal of a transformed, modernized and re-industrialised Gauteng City Region.

In addition, we will continue to rely on you as the moral compass and conscience of our communities and the drivers of social cohesion and nation-building.

You are the custodians of our dream of a more humane and caring value system underpinned by humility, integrity and honesty.

As religious leaders of different faiths, you must show tolerance and diversity which is the distinct gift that South Africa takes to the world. Inter-faith sessions should be convened to honour and respect our diversity.

We have worked together very well with the faith-based sector to contain the outbreak of xenophobic violence in the recent past. We must step up our programmes to make all communities understand that we have a common humanity. We are all made in the image of our Redeemer.

We have also worked tirelessly and closely with religious leaders to resolve conflicts in various communities across the province, public transport issues and problems afflicting the education system such as racism, satanism and drugs.

This Summit must also deal with how we must together confront harmful religious practices and the abuse of the rights of others in the name of faith.

Like many of you, I am deeply concerned by the conduct of some religious leaders who feed on the vulnerability of the children of God who face many difficulties in their daily lives. We have seen an increase in incidents where congregants are made to drink petrol, eat rats or snakes whilst others rape other congregants or confess to practicing witchcraft. Together let us find lasting solutions to these scourges.

We are also aware that some amongst you are worried about false stories being spread around that ANC-led government has a policy to scrap the Good Friday/Easter holidays. There is no truth to this. In fact, it is impossible for the ANC to take such

a position; you and I will not allow it. The ANC was founded in the church.

Programme Director, we are encouraged that this Summit involves all spheres of government and allows for inter-governmental relations forums to impact on how government relates with the faith-based sector.

This is especially true with regards to local government; which stands at the coalface of service delivery. We are aware of spatial planning challenges that at times bring churches into loggerheads with local government.

This Summit must help us resolve such issue. It must also lead to stronger working relations between faith based organizations and all spheres of government including local government.

Many of you have also raised with us the fundamental question of planning community developments in a way that caters to the spiritual needs of our communities by availing land for places of worship.

I know of churches that are occupying land parcels for many years without a title deed from municipalities. Others are using schools and community halls as places of worship and this creates complications, uncertainties and tensions.

Let us work together to ensure that every municipality follow the example of the City of Tshwane by allocating land for worship and giving title deeds to churches.

I am glad that yesterday the panel of municipal leaders focused on this important question of getting one policy in the entire Gauteng City Region that will deal with the allocation of sites for worship. MEC Mayathula-Khoza will work with all MMCs in the Metros and Districts to ensure that we bring one policy to the Premier's Coordinating Forum so that it can be adopted the Gauteng City Region for implementation by all municipalities.

Ladies and gentlemen, men and women of Faith, the Fifth Administration which I have the honour to lead with humility, is absolutely committed to a clean, responsive, consultative, transparent and activist approach to government.

You can see that we are going all over Gauteng to resolve community problems and unblock service delivery through Ntirhisano Service Delivery War Room and Community Outreach Programme.

To this end, we have assigned each Member of the Executive Council a sector in order to coordinate, strengthen and improve stakeholder relations between the entire government in the Gauteng City Region and different sectors of society.

In the case of the Faith Based Organisations, we are led by MEC Nandi Mayathula-Khoza. MEC Mayathula-Khoza continues to do excellent work in this sector. Part of her work has culminated in this Summit.

I am today happy to announce that we have also appointed Reverend Gift Moerane as the Co-Convenor of this sector to assist MEC Mayathula-Khoza.

Reverend Moerane is also the Deputy Chairperson of the Gauteng AIDS Council, which I chair. He will work together with MEC Mayathula-Khoza, among others to ensure that matters affecting this very important sector of our society.

For the first time, you can be certain that the views and inputs of the faith-based sector will find their way into the cabinet system and all inter-governmental forums in Gauteng.

We are doing this as part of our on-going commitment to ensure that issues relating to this sector receive the highest attention in our province at the level of cabinet and the relevant intergovernmental structures.

We are also doing this because, to us the faith-based sector is a pillar of strength for both our communities and our democratic government.

I wish you a successful Summit. We truly look forward to the outcome of this Summit.

God Bless Africa!

Thank you.