



KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE MAYOR OF LEPHALALE MUNICIPALITY DURING LEPHALALE SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION SUMMIT HELD ON 20 JUNE 2017.

- Programme Director.
- Medupi Project Manager
- Representative of Office of the Premier.
- Deputy Director of LEDET
- Deputy Director of Coghsta.
- District Manager of Department of Agriculture
- Municipal employees led by Municipal Manager
- Local entrepreneurs, especially Youth and Women.
- Distinguished guests
- Media houses
- Ladies and Gentlemen

I bring you revolutionary greetings from the collective leadership of Lephale municipality.

During a historically important summit like this, it is important for us to revisit our history books; especially on matters dealing with political and economic revolution of our country.

It is important that we rewind our memories back to 1952; during the arrival of the Boers led by their commander, Jan Van Riebeck. The Dutch people who were travelling from Europe to Asia realised the strategic and economic importance of South Africa. That is why they established the Fort of Good Hope at Cape town. At first they established this fort with the aim of providing fresh vegetables and resting place for the Europeans on their way to India, but later they developed interest in South Africa.

They then decided to do what they termed “to transform the political and economic landscape of the uncivilized Cape”. They established Dutch-East India company with Cape as their formal and official rest station.

The economic importance of South Africa was then realized. That was followed by the brutal taking of land from the African kingdoms by the whites.

The English-speaking people also developed interest in South Africa, and that resulted in the war between the boers and the English speaking people – The Anglo-Boer war. When tired of fighting, with none of them emerging as total winners, they signed a peace treaty in 1910. That treaty resulted in the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910. The terms of that treaty were very clear: The Boers, because they settled in South Africa before the English-speaking people, will get political power. Boers agreed because when they settled in Cape, their aim was to use Cape as a resting station on their way to make business in India. They did not have economic interest in South Africa. The English-speaking will control economic power, including the mines.

In order to succeed in their mission, they left the Blacks totally out of their political and economic plans. To legalise their segregation policy, the Union of South Africa passed the Land Act in 1913, dispossessing the Blacks of their land. And to make sure that the Blacks remain inferior and illiterate they made education expensive and subject Blacks to inferior Bantu education. This inferior Bantu education made sure that Blacks are not taught economically relevant education. They will spend most of their primary schools taught fiction stories, mental and recitations. Technical skills subjects were channelled to whites.

The Bantu education continued like that until we were rescued by the brave young students of 1976. The 1976 students had their mission; and they fulfilled it. We have our mission; which is **Radical Economic transformation in our lifetime**, and we must not betray it. Wwe must fulfil it in our lifetime. That is why we have organised summit like this one.

This summit takes place four (4) days after the forty-first (41st) commemoration of the 16 June 1976 students uprising. The democratic government of South Africa declared the 16th of June a national Youth day in honour of the heroic 1976 students.

This year's National Youth Day, which was commemorated last week Friday, was commemorated under the theme: ***"The Year of OR Tambo – Advancing Youth Economic Empowerment."***

This theme clearly outlines the objectives of the ANC-led government about the youth this year. This theme is guided by what the late ANC longest serving president believed about the importance of youth in the country. Comrade OR Tambo said the following about the youth:

"A country, a movement, a people, that does not value its youth, does not have future."

Today's event is informed by that statement by OR Tambo. It is because Lephalale local municipality values its youth that we arranged this seminar. It is because Lephalale local municipality knows that the youth of today no longer struggles for political freedom but economic freedom that we arranged this socio-economic transformation seminar.

The objective of this seminar is to develop local young entrepreneurs who are more entrepreneurial, more adventurous, better educated and economically innovative. We want Lephalale local municipality to develop the youth who will use the advantages of the imperatives of progressive policies such as the National Development Plan (NDP) to reduce unemployment, poverty and inequality by 2030.

We are aware that Statistics South Africa has revealed that the country's unemployment figures has risen to 27,7% in the first quarter of 2017. Statistics South Africa's Social Profile of Youth 2009 to 2014 reported that unemployment among the youth was sitting at 66,6% by 2014. These figures tells you that as government we must do something to rectify this situation. That is why Lephalale local municipality came up with the idea of holding this seminar.

We know that youth are the most vulnerable people in our society. Once they are left idling in the street unemployed and with no source of income, they become hungry and angry. And once they are hungry and angry, they can do anything, including crime, drugs and counter-revolutionary actions.

As government we must then be proactive and come up with radical economic transformation programmes that will address our youth before hopelessness can drive them to engage in counter-revolutionary activities.

Those of you who have listened to the president of the country comrade Jacob Zuma and the premier of Limpopo province addressing the youth on national youth day last week Friday will agree with me that the ANC-led government is committed to implement radical economic transformation by empowering youth economically. That is why the theme of youth day this year was: “The Year of OR Tambo – Advancing Youth Economic Empowerment.”

This theme is a commitment from the ANC-led government to develop young entrepreneurs and support youth initiatives and innovations that are aimed at moving our youth from consumers to producers.

We have invited relevant stakeholders who will assist you to become entrepreneurs. As you have realised when we acknowledged them; we have employees from Department of Economic Development who will inform you on how government is planning to implement radical economic transformation. We have representatives from one of the main banks in South Africa, ABSA, who will share with you how they plan to support Black-owned SMMEs, especially those owned by women and youth.

We have Eskom-Medupi, who will inform this summit on how they intent to leave a living legacy by empowering local SMMEs. We have Coghsta, which is one of the leading government departments that already have plans like, Youth Empowerment Plan (YEP) which is meant to empower women and youth. We cannot talk about our guest institutions and forget our local municipality. We know that charity begins at home, and we know that our municipality has a progressive mission that talks about rural development, local economic development and job creation. So we have the accounting officer of our municipality who will share with this summit the municipality’s plan to implement radical economic transformation.

We believe that when you leave this summit you will be in a good position to define your own roles in radical economic transformation.

I THANK YOU

CLLR. MOLOKO MAEKO

MAYOR – Lephalale Local Municipality.