

Opening and welcoming remarks by Hon Sw Lubisi to the Youth Parliament, Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature

15 June 2012

Programme Director: Hon LT Maabane;
Our Honourable Guest: Ms Ayanda Dlodlo, Deputy Minister of Public Service and Administration of the Republic of South Africa; Members of the Executive Council in attendance Hon KC Mashego-Dlamini and Hon MNS Manana who was here but had to leave due to other government commitments; Chief Whip of the Majority Party Hon BT Shongwe;
Honourable Members of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature; Leaders of youth formations; Representatives of student formations; Officials representing state departments; Members of the Media;
Distinguished delegates to this Youth Parliament; Comrades, Friends Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is a privilege and honour for me to welcome you to the 2012 Youth Parliament. It is our firm belief that the Youth Parliament contributes immensely to the deepening of our democracy and it is one of the most effective tools for involvement and participation of the young citizens in the Legislature.

I must say that this Legislature belongs to you and we shall continuously strive to ensure that the voices of young people are heard within this chamber; equally, I challenge you to take full ownership of the Legislature.

We are aware of the challenges imposed by our history on our people; however, our firm belief is that we must work with you to deal with these challenges.

None of us can decide the future of our people without them.

Delegates to the Youth Parliament,

Allow me to quote the words of Minister Trevor Manuel in his foreword to the National Development Plan of South Africa:

"South Africa has the means, the good will, the people and the resources to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality. It is within our grasp. But it will not happen unless we write this new story; a story of people, their relationships, their dreams and their hopes for a better tomorrow. We want our children and young people to have better life chances than we have."

Our critical task at hand is to continuously inspire hope to the people of South Africa and it is the youth that carries a great potential to achieve this goal. If the young people of today are not focused, not educated and not organised then the future is doomed.

Ladies and Gentlemen

This country is longing for young cadres who will not only be spectators, but actors in this theatre of life. Our work is therefore to together inspire our people to live with a sustained hope and belief that tomorrow will be a better day

This can only be realised if our young people embrace the value of discipline, self-respect and responsible citizenry. This country cannot afford to have a carefree generation of young people whose behaviour is tantamount to self-extinction.

Our youth must continuously empower themselves through acquisition of knowledge and skill through learning and self-development. These are the only guarantees for a better future.

Equally, we need a state that will continuously identify, harness and shape the capabilities of its citizens through providing an enabling environment. This will be achieved through continuous strengthening of policies governing youth development in our country.

Our developmental state must intervene directly in the socio-economic arena to ensure that our citizens are equipped with requisite skills through education, but equally intervene more directly in the economy through a variety of means to promote the growth of new industries and to reduce the dislocations caused by shifts in investment and profits from old to new industries.

At the centre of our youth development agenda should be education at both primary and tertiary levels. We must critically ensure that our young people are exposed to Agricultural industries for the sake of food security. All these issues demand that the state intervenes decisively and provide resources for the benefit of our youth.

Delegates to the Youth Parliament

We are glad to note that the government is responding positively to some of the resolutions adopted by our previous youth parliament especially on the issue of the tertiary institution in the Mpumalanga Province.

I want to assure you that this Youth Parliament is not just a talk shop because during the 4th Legislature we have resolved to further give meaning to all our sectoral parliaments by ensuring that all resolutions adopted are tabled in the house and further followed up by the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature, for implementation.

This has indeed proven to be important in deepening our oversight mechanism but also reaffirming the value of public participation which are both imposed on us by our duty and of course as stipulated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

We will therefore ensure that all resolutions adopted by this youth parliament are followed up and accounted for. Let us use this sectoral parliament to map the way forward in ensuring that service delivery is advanced and defend the hard earned political freedom but equally advance for our economic emancipation.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me to also convey our special thanks and words of appreciation and welcome to the Deputy Minister of Public Service and Administration of the Republic of South Africa Honourable Ayanda Dlodlo; a seasoned cadre of Umkhonto Wesizwe and Leader of the African National Congress; who have responded positively to our invitation for her to come and deliver a key note address to us here today. Indeed we are honoured by your presence honourable Deputy Minister Dlodlo.

As I conclude, allow me to direct your thoughts to the words of our most revered son of the soil, Dr Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela on the 10th of May 1994, when He said:

"We have at last achieved our political emancipation. We pledge ourselves to liberate our people from the continuing bondage of poverty, deprivation, suffering, gender and other discrimination."

We therefore have this collective responsibility imposed on us by Dr Mandela in 1994 to ensure that our people are emancipated from social inequalities and economic deprivation which imposes poverty and exclusion to our citizens. At the core of our tools for emancipation is access to education and land. We must therefore utilise this session to take informed decisions and set specific targets for both the province and our country. None of us can achieve the above alone but working together we can do more to accelerate youth development for a better future.

Delegates to the Youth Parliament

Let us continue to work together and advance the agenda for youth development for a better future. You are most welcome to this Youth Parliament and I wish you robust, sincere, and most vibrant debates. You are most welcome to this sectoral parliament.

Long Live the Youth of South Africa

Viva Youth Day!