

Address by Hon SW Lubisi: Speaker of Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature during Prayer breakfast at Lekwa

28 February 2011

Deputy Speaker of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature; Hon VS Siwela
Members of the Executive Council
Members of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature
Chairperson of the House of Traditional Leaders Inkosi Siphohle Mhlangu
Deputy Chairperson of the House of Traditional Leaders Kgosi Mphahlele and other Traditional leaders in attendance
Speaker of Gert Sibande District Municipality; Cllr Flora Maboja-Boltman
and other councillors present here today
Religious Leaders from different faith groups present here today
Esteemed Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen
People of Lekwa Municipality
Good Morning,

We are gathered together from our different faith groups and belief systems, united by the common purpose i.e. to reaffirm our collective connection with the spiritual life beyond our physical being. Our assembly here today illuminates our unity in diversity and the beautiful South African "Rainbow Nation". It further confirms the provision in Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South i.e. the Bill of rights of South Africa which states "Everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion".

The constitution of the Republic of South Africa reaffirms our collective consciousness of the divine authority hence in its preamble invites God to Bless Africa, Our National Anthem is a prayer inviting spiritual authority to bring an end wars and suffering. Furthermore, our constitution guarantees the freedom of religion; these are the hallmarks of our democracy. As it was pronounced by Thomas Jefferson in 1807 when he said "among the inestimable of our blessings, also, is that...of liberty to worship our Creator in the way we think most agreeable to his will". South Africa therefore prides itself as one the younger democracies in the world by its ability to enable different faiths to exist side by side in peace and harmony without fear of repression by one over the other.

Ladies and Gentlemen

This Prayer breakfast seeks to connect all faith groups in our country and province and it transcends all denominations. It is envisioned as a broad and essential element of the spiritual and religious vision, which is central in the execution of our national agenda of building a united, non racial, democratic South Africa. It is my belief that national unity, non racialism, democracy, freedom of choice is a fundamental feature of a stable society.

As it was pronounced by Rabbi Goldstein "Societies are held together by a shared moral and not a mere convenience. The continued survival and endurance of our new South Africa will depend on our combining to formulate a common moral, religious and Spiritual vision". If we truly seek to achieve our goal of building a better society, we are required to continuously build a moral society held together by our firm belief of the existence of the divinity.

Programme Director

This morning we are afforded a rare opportunity to assemble in this unique congregation and to pray for the country and the Mpumalanga Province, pray for the Peace in Africa and the World; pray for Safety against Natural Disasters; pray for Political Leaders and quite significantly pray for Successful 2011 Local Government Elections. Above all, this event accords all of us an opportunity to reconnect with our spiritual world and the divinity.

Mahatma Gandhi once said "Prayer is not asking. It is a longing of the soul. It is daily admission of one's weakness" Indeed prayer is a unique dialogue with God as we seek answers to our constraints and to appreciate our glories. The Islam belief that prayer is the main source of connection with Allah, the main emphasis is therefore that whosoever ceases to pray loses his divine connection and faith thereof. V Kumar an independent freelance writer in his article published on the 31st of August 2008 says "Prayers and devotion to the Lord is one of the three paths of self actualization in Hinduism.

Ladies and Gentlemen

This year marks yet another milestone in the Annual Speaker's Prayer breakfast programme as we are hosting it for the first time outside the area of the seat of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature; furthermore we have integrated the prayer breakfast concept with the "Taking Legislature to the People" Programme. I am informed that the local religious leaders across all the faiths responded positively to the programme and have contributed towards the successful hosting of this event. We hope that this event shall not be the end itself but the beginning of a long lasting working relationship with you; working together we can do more in building a moral society.

We therefore dedicate this prayer breakfast to the People of Lekwa Local Municipality, we are conscious of the challenges that the Municipality has gone through and appreciate all the efforts put by the provincial government under the stewardship of the honourable Premier Mr. DD Mabuza, the local community leaders and individual leaders in ensuring that this Municipality is turned around and becomes the beacon of hope for its people.

Later today during the sitting of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature which will be for the 1st time held in Lekwa Local Municipality since 1994, we shall engage on a debate of the State of the Province address delivered by Honourable DD Mabuza on Friday the 25th of February 2011, this prayer breakfast is also dedicated to the Honourable Premier and his Executive Council for them to have strength as they execute the vision of the ANC led government to bring about a better life for all. On the same nerve this prayer breakfast is dedicated to the Honourable members of the Legislature as they continue to perform oversight over the Executive. The legislature should remain the bastion of our democracy.

Ladies and Gentlemen

We are all conscious of the ills of our society i.e. poverty, diseases, crime, drugs and corruption, abuse of women, children and the vulnerable elements of our society, as we draw closer to the 3rd decade of freedom we are called upon to occupy the centre stage and work side by side to build a moral society. I have directed the personnel in my office to ensure that we later this year convene a religious summit in a form of a sectoral parliament. In this regard we will be engaging all religious leaders and traditional to participate in a dialogue which will among others help us to address all these challenges within our society in a different way.

As we light these candles of Hope we commit ourselves to work tirelessly towards building a better country and a moral society, we are conscious that this will not be an easy task but we are inspired by the pronouncements by the former President of the Republic of South Africa Dr. Nelson Mandela on the 10th of May 1994 on the occasion of his inauguration as the 1st President of the Democratic South Africa when he said "We understand it still that there is no easy road to freedom. We know it well that none of us acting alone can achieve success. We must therefore act together as a united people, for national reconciliation, for nation building, for the birth of a new world." Like Madiba we are conscious of the challenges and constraints that lie ahead but we shall not give in. It therefore gives me pleasure to welcome you to this Annual Speaker's Prayer Breakfast.

Thank You.