

Programme Director Hon SI Malaza

Our Guest of Honour: Mrs Mildred Oliphant; Minister of Labour of South Africa

Hon Deputy Chairperson of Committees in the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature, Ms P Ngobeni

Member of the Executive Council of the Mpumalanga Province in attendance Hon NS Mtsweni

Honourable Members of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature

Leaders of the Labour Movement COSATU and FEDUSA and other Unions that are present here today

Representatives of Government Departments

Representatives of the Media

Distinguished delegates to this Workers Parliament

Ladies and Gentlemen

Comrades, friends

Good Morning

Asubuhi njema (Swahili)

Mwaramutse (Kinyarwanda)

In the year 1848 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels made a very important rallying call to the workers as part of the Communist manifesto when they said "*Workers of*

*the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains!"*

This call for worker's unity defied the colonial boundaries and advanced solidarity and cooperation amongst workers of the world. I am making the above reference because I believe and I know as a matter of fact that many workers of our country and the world believe that workers unity and international solidarity are fundamental in the workers struggles.

I say this in the begin because I want us to pose and ask ourselves whether the workers of South Africa have done enough in defence of the foreigners in South Africa who have in the past month which is also celebrated as the workers month fell prey to the criminal attacks masqueraded in the form of Xenophobia in our country.

Last night I had the pleasure of reading the Communist manifesto which I have already made reference to and the Bible and I discovered it contains some injunctions that capture this issue of people living in foreign land clearly in the book of Leviticus 19 Verse 33 and it reads thus *"When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them"*

Ladies and Gentlemen

Writing about the Class Struggles the former President of Ghana Dr Kwame Nkrumah said *"Africa is one*

*continent, one people, and one nation. The notion that in order to have a nation it is necessary for there to be a common language, a common territory and common culture has failed to stand the test of time or the scrutiny of scientific definition of objective reality... "*

*Dr Nkrumah further said "The community of economic life is the major feature within a nation, and it is the economy which holds together the people living in a territory. It is on this basis that the new Africans recognise themselves as potentially one nation, whose dominion is the entire African continent. "*

Delegates to the Workers Parliament of 2015

I believe that the workers possess greater abilities to everyday ensure that South Africa rids itself of any forms of discrimination and ill-treatment against other person. Like the Xenophobic attacks .

This can be achieved by deepening international worker's solidarity and unity for the workers of the African continent.

Workers unity defies language and cultural barriers and creates common identity among those who till the soil, mine our minerals and extract oil from the heart of our earth.

Furthermore, the rallying call for Workers Unity speaks to the current challenges confronting the labour movement where the shrinking global economy and retrenchments and closure of firms has resulted in

dwindling power of all Unions as their membership continue to decline.

We have also convened this Workers Parliament at the backdrop of the Freedom Charter Celebration which the ruling party i.e. the African National Congress has declared the year 2015 as *the year of the Freedom Charter and unity in action to advance economic freedom.*

As we celebrate the Freedom Charter we can proudly say the following:

*All workers of South Africa are free to form trade unions, to elect their officers and to make wage agreements with their employers as the freedom charter prescribes*

*South Africa recognise the right and duty of all to work, and to draw full unemployment benefits in line with the freedom charter*

*Men and women of all races in South Africa qualify equal pay for equal work*

*The state is helping the people with implements, seed, tractors and irrigation scheme to save the soil and assist the tillers.*

I have just mentioned these achievements amongst the others to demonstrate that the Freedom Charter is at the centre of the Transformation Agenda of our country.

It is also true that a lot more needs to be done to make advances in the economy to ensure that all the workers of our country enjoy the fruits of our freedom.

Delegates to the Workers Parliament

We are assembled here today to make an objective assessment of the progress we have made in reforming the labour market.

Furthermore we need to reflect on the role of the workers in navigating the economic landscape and to assess how we can defend the gains of democracy in South Africa.

Indeed, our country has achieved a lot of progress since the 1994 democratic breakthrough which includes the right to fair labour practise for workers and the right to participate in the activities and programmes of a trade union of their choice as prescribed in the Freedom Charter.

South Africa have also since the year 1994 passed laws that governs remuneration of the various sectors especially the vulnerable one like the domestic and the farm workers through the various sectoral determination which prescribes minimum salaries for them.

We are also aware that some employers are deliberately violating these laws and still abusing our workers.

Therefore, we must all in the context of the Freedom Charter unite and confront these industries to ensure that the lives of our people become better as instructed by the Freedom Charter.

Let us ensure that all vulnerable workers in the province are accorded all the benefits and respect they deserve.

The Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature is committed to advancing the working class agenda as we continue to pass laws that respond to the plight of the workers.

We say so because everything that stands and moves in our country and the world is the product of a worker.

Your sweat and blood feeds the nation and build both the private and public infrastructure, your wisdom educate us, your hands heal our wounds.

As it was written by Ralph Chaplin in 1915 in the most famous Union Anthem which says: *"it is we who ploughed the prairies; built the cities where they trade; Dug the mines and build workshops, endless miles of railroad laid; Now we stand outcast starving midst wonders we have made; But the Union makes us strong"*

This anthem affirms that the strength of workers is derived from their union because without unity the workers become weak and vulnerable. Hence we say Unity Make them strong.

Allow me to voice our appreciation to Minister Oliphant for honouring our invite. I must say she has become part of us as she always responds positively to the Mpumalanga Legislature when we invite her.

Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me pleasure to welcome you to this Welcome Parliament and I am looking forward to the various reports that your commissions will be Tabling in this house.

Allow me to welcome you with the poetic verses extracted from Pambereni ne Chimurenga which reads thus:

***When the Sun rises from East***

***And sets down West***

***It's a mystical journey of the universe***

***Somehow it conveys complex messages***

***Messages of Hope***

***Messages of Unity***

***Messages of Social Cohesion***

***Unity in bona fides***

***United in action***

***We can achieve more***

***United by national ideals***

***We can strengthen national unity***

***Pamberi ne Chimurenga***

***Forward with Social Cohesion***

***Forward with Africa's economic liberation***

***Forward with Africa's unity***

***For we are descendants of Africa!***

Pamberi Ne Chimurenga! Forward With the  
Revolutionary Struggle Pamberi Hondo!

Forward warriors of Economic Freedom and Equality.  
Workers of South Africa Unite, You Have nothing to  
lose but you freedom

Once again welcome to the Mpumalanga Provincial  
Legislature, your parliament.

***Khanimambo,***

***Bondia,***

***Muito obrigado***

***Thank You Very Much! Aluta Continua!***