

**REMARKS BY HONOURABLE PREMIER SENZO MCHUNU AT THE AFRICAN RENAISSANCE CONFERENCE HELD AT THE DURBAN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE, ON 25 MAY 2015**

Programme Director, Professor Sihawu Ngubane  
Your Worship the Mayor, Cllr James Nxumalo  
Minister in the Presidency, Jeff Radebe  
Minister of Small Business Development, Ms Lindiwe Zulu  
Colleagues in the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Executive Council  
Diplomatic Corps  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great pleasure for me to be here at this 17<sup>th</sup> African Renaissance Conference. As the Province of KwaZulu-Natal, we are proud to host delegates from outside our province to this festival of ideas. We look forward to engaging in the conference proceedings, which are highly relevant to the Office of Premier's own interests and priorities.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the organisers led by Mr Andre Kipiela, for allowing me to share with you my thoughts about an important and relevant topic of entrepreneurs of Africa and our Provincial Government's approach to entrepreneur development through education. Education is not just a means to an end, but is both a means and an end of development.

This conference is held on an important day in the calendar of the African continent, wherein we celebrate what has come to be known as Africa Day. Fifty Two years ago, leaders of the independent states of Africa met on this day in Addis Ababa, and signed the founding charter of the Organisation of African Unity.

We observe this day as a celebration of African Unity at home and in the Diaspora, and as a moment to recommit ourselves to work towards the full integration of Africa.

Among the primary objectives the generation of Kwame Nkrumah and Haile Selassie had, was to co-ordinate and intensify the co-operation of African states in order to achieve a better life for the people of Africa.

Over the last few weeks, various events were held across the country since the launch of Africa Month celebration by Minister Mthethwa on 1 April 2015 at Freedom Park, Pretoria. These events have provided us with necessary platform to engage in a festival of ideas and cultural exchanges so that we learn from one another thereby strengthening our unity in diversity.

They have also provided us with platform to network and deepen our conversations about the African continent and the future we seek to build. We have celebrated the unity of Africa through music, literature, visual arts, film, fashion, cuisines, seminars, lectures and panel discussions. Without doubt, this has made us a better people than we were a month before.

As we celebrate this year's Africa Day, we are reminded of the recent incidents of violence in our Province and elsewhere in the country, which were directed at fellow African brothers and sisters. Such violence went against everything we stand for as a society and undermined the progress we have done as a continent in building unity and integration of our countries and economies.

Indeed, it brought shame and pain to all peace loving people bearing in mind that our continent has experienced years of conflict, massacres and displacement of people leading to the deprivation of their livelihoods.

When violence manifests itself due to intolerance and discrimination against other human beings on the basis of their origin, the whole of humanity is the main loser. As we look into the role of entrepreneurship in the development of our continent, we must not limit this to economic entrepreneurship but extend it to social entrepreneurship that will advocate for tolerance education and search for lasting solutions to the prevailing challenges of migration.

As the 21st Century unfolds, we are faced with a different set of challenges and opportunities for our countries and our continent. Our major task now, is to achieve development and eradicate poverty, which holds back aspirations of the people to fully realise the fruits of independence and freedom. Poverty is the singular greatest challenge of this century. It erodes all necessary capabilities for those entrapped in it, to enjoy a life of dignity.

Our search for solutions and any set of interventions we make, must be centred on education as a tool that can enable individuals and communities to extract themselves from poverty.

Since the dawn of independence, Africa has grappled with the challenge of under-development, which has bred poverty and inequality. This was further deepened by challenges of governance deficits, endless conflicts leading to deaths and displacement of millions of people, policy implementation failures as well as brain drain. It cannot be disputed that Africa's development challenges are largely to do with our colonial history.

We cannot change history and it is what it is. Meanwhile, new developments are emerging in the rest of the continent. Africa that had been characterized as a dark continent, is now without doubt the frontier of development. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), 7 out of 10 world's fastest growing economies with above 7 percent annual average growth, are in Africa.

These are Ethiopia, Mozambique, Tanzania, Congo, Ghana, Zambia and Nigeria. The African Development Bank estimates that by 2030, most African countries will boast middle class majorities, taking consumer spending to \$2.2 trillion a year.

The key strategic question is: 'Where does future economic potential lie?' Every major economic report over that last five years point to an Africa on the rise. The potential is huge and is yet to be unlocked. Africa is certainly ripe for commercial engagement and the intensity of engagement with the global South has been on the rise.

Our province has great potential that still needs to be unlocked. We want to unlock such potential, particularly in the areas of agriculture and agro-processing, maritime industry, renewable energy and biotechnology. Countries like China, India, Russia, Brazil and the gulf states are bringing in fresh capital and massive infrastructure development. With all this growth, we still have certain prohibitive challenges. These are at a level of soft infrastructure, i.e. education and social services which are poorly developed.

Programme Director, Ladies and Gentlemen

Africa's landscape is changing fast. The continent is not the same as two decades ago. The question for South Africa, is where do we fit in this story of a rising Africa? Our country went through years of separate development, which on the main served the minority section of our population. It has only been 21 years since the collapse of apartheid. During this period, the democratic government has had to contend with deep socio-economic inequalities that are a result of years of bad policies and mismanagement by apartheid regime.

Unfortunately they compounded due to constrained economic growth partly as a result of global economic challenges. We have had substantial job losses due to skills shortages. People are the province's most valuable asset. However, amongst the current challenges facing us are youth unemployment and the slow rate of black economic empowerment. These issues are directly related to poverty, food insecurity, substance abuse and criminal activity.

That is why in the Provincial Government of KwaZulu-Natal, we created in the Office of the Premier a Chief Directorate on Youth Development. This unit will not solve all our problems, but will refocus our interventions on youth development. It will coordinate all youth development initiatives in the province to ensure synergies. Furthermore, it will focus on research on youth development and promote the interests of young people in general.

The creation of this unit and its coming into being, does not presuppose that our development challenges will be erased overnight. It is nonetheless an important step in tackling a more complex challenge of youth unemployment. Part of the issues we are focused on is expanding learning and skills development opportunities, assisting youth to fight social ills, supporting youth to participate in strategic sectors of the economy and youth leadership development.

Efforts like these will have those who applaud them and equally those who view it as another waste of resources. A number of initiatives have been introduced, and yet youth unemployment remains the sore blight of our democratic dispensation.

In appreciating challenges of development process, J. Paul Martin from Columbia University, makes an analogy of a car manufacturing process. Think of a car manufacturing process to emphasise development-planning fault lines. Imagine a car that has wonderful lines, fine upholstery, a powerful engine and affordable price, but it has an unreliable transmission or defective braking system.

No one would buy such a car and the makers would waste no time in fixing the problems. Unfortunately defects in development projects are not so easily recognized. Like a good car, development is the end product of multiple scientific and technological inputs, all carefully crafted together to make the end product functional, reliable and cost effective.

To grow Africa through entrepreneurship, there is a need for physical capacities, appropriate technology, a minimum of social order, access to required finance and equipment, and capacity building. As in the case of the car, ideas are not enough. Goodwill and even hard work are only some of the components.

The importance and positive contribution of entrepreneurs and an entrepreneurial culture in the economic and social development of KwaZulu-Natal to counter these problems must be stressed. Entrepreneurs generate and bring to life ideas through the development of new technologies, products and services. There is a need for

entrepreneurs to establish more successful small and medium business as they are the largest contributors to new employment opportunities.

In order to facilitate entrepreneurship, ease of access to education to acquire skills and knowledge must be provided. A highly skilled workforce will improve the global socio-economic status of KwaZulu-Natal. In addition, a strong focus is required on scarce skills such as engineering, science and technology, accounting, information technology, agriculture, health and social services.

We will endeavour to work with the international community and the entire African continent to ensure that we create a skilled and motivated workforce that will benefit KwaZulu-Natal's future generations. We will work with our neighbouring countries and the rest of Africa, to expand market opportunities for our entrepreneurs and in that way create demand for their goods and services, and attract investment from other African countries to increase domestic jobs.

For us to achieve this, we must bear in mind that Africa is one. Our destiny as a country is intertwined with that of the rest of Africa. Africa's freedom was our freedom, and our freedom was Africa's freedom.

I wish you a fruitful conference that will produce concrete outcomes and a roadmap on how we grow Africa's entrepreneurs as means to build our own continent.

I thank you.