

SPEAKING NOTES FOR THE HONOURABLE PREMIER MR ES MCHUNU TO THE DURBAN DIPLOMATIC CORPS FUNCTION TO COMMEMORATE HUMAN RIGHTS DAY, ON 21 MARH 2015 AT THE DURBAN COUNTRY CLUB.

Your Excellency Andrzej Kiepiela, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps;
Lord Michael Cashman, Member of the House of Lords, United Kingdom;
Chairs and Presidents of the Communities of respective countries residing in KwaZulu-Natal;
Your Worship the Mayor of eThekweni Municipality;
Distinguished Guests;
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It gives me and my wife great pleasure to be with you tonight on this historic day in the history and calendar of the Republic of South Africa to commemorate together this 2015 Human Rights Day.

The 21st of March marks the blight spot in our country's history, where security forces at the time, killed fellow South Africans who were marching for their human rights and ultimately the liberation of our country. The period preceding this day and the subsequent ones, put to the fore the question of fundamental freedoms like freedom of expression, association, assembly and the right to receive information, respect for human dignity and freedom from exploitation, torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment, freedom of the press and a number of others that had been violated at an unprecedented scale.

It was therefore correct to say we must have a day in our calendar to commemorate human rights, and further to recommit ourselves to embrace as an ethos of life, principles of democratic governance. Our democratic breakthrough of 1994 and the subsequent adoption of our Constitution in 1996, remains the point of reference for the ushering of human rights in our country. It remains a point of reference to the progress we have made as a country in extending dignity to all. Our much celebrated Constitution commits to and guarantees all three generations of rights, which are civil

and political rights; economic, social and cultural rights; and group rights in one legal instrument.

Together with the international community, we were able to end dictatorship, gross violation of human rights and sectarian form of governance. The Human Rights Day, equally offer us a moment for deep reflection on our unfortunate and painful past, and how at individual level we can play our role of building a prosperous South Africa. Although it is a day of atonement, it should also be about us identifying further areas that need attention to ensure that the enjoyment of human rights, is not something abstract but real and felt by those we consider to be the poorest and marginalised amongst us.

Our struggle to fulfil the promise of the Freedom Charter, which to this day is our guiding light to a fully democratic, non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous South Africa remains incomplete if we have not defeated poverty, underdevelopment, and economic deprivation.

It is indisputable that we have made great strides in fulfilling the Bill of Rights as found in Chapter 2 of our Constitution.

We have given shelter to the previously unsheltered. We have expanded access to education from primary to tertiary level. We have expanded healthcare provisions, most importantly primary health and provision of medical care to those infected by HIV and AIDS. We have connected communities through roads and bridges, thus eliminating human made islands of segregation.

We are mindful of the journey we have travelled, and the progress we have made in extending dignity to all South Africans. Equally, we are seized with the realities of what we yet have to achieve to ensure human rights to all. Whereas civil liberties are the cornerstone of human dignity; poverty tend to undermine their worthiness. In this regard, the true test of the meaningfulness and applicability of rights listed in our Constitution, lie in the success we would record in eradicating poverty and inequality in our country.

Because we are seized with these realities, we have identified areas that need immediate attention and necessary measures to address remaining challenges. Just as we sought the support of the international community in our fight against apartheid, we equally seek to consolidate our relationship to confront and compound our current challenges.

As KwaZulu-Natal, we have since developed a clear plan on how to eradicate poverty in our lifetime. This is anchored on five game changers. These are **social security and housing, agriculture development, enterprise development, employment creation** and **skills development**. We will be engaging you and other partners on this to unpack it further so that we identify potential areas of cooperation.

Earlier this afternoon, we laid to rest a gentle giant of our struggle, Mr Collins Chabane, the late Minister of Public Service and Administration. It is important to reflect on his life of service to humanity, because apart from all the roles he played both in the African National Congress and government, he led a process of redesigning our current administration.

Part of this, was to rename the Department of Foreign Affairs to the Department of International Relations and Cooperation. This was a realisation that affairs unlike relationships, are short-lived whereas relationships are a long journey of fellowship. That is what we are seeking and reaching out for from you. A relationship that will take us to the logical conclusion of our struggle.

You have demonstrated as the European Union that we can count on you in building our country to ensure the full realisation of human rights for all. We thank you for the support you provided in the past in building our human rights centred institutions of the state. We also thank you for being the first among other nations of the world to conclude a trade package with South Africa shortly after our democratic breakthrough. To this day, the European Union remains our key trading partner thus enabling market access for our goods and services. We equally thank you for the foreign direct investment you have made to our country and in particular our Province of KwaZulu-Natal.

The journey ahead is still long and at times will be steep. We have high levels of unemployment particularly youth unemployment in our province. We believe that education and skills development is critical in guaranteeing the full realisation of human dignity for our youth. 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. To be able to unlock the potential of these sectors, we need educated and skilled workforce.

It is in this regard that we look for your support through bursary and scholarship to our young people to further their education in these areas. That would contribute towards our efforts of building KwaZulu-Natal as a dynamic and competitive economy.

We are determined to end poverty in our lifetime. We count on your support. We cannot afford to continuously celebrate our miracle of political breakthrough as a country, if we cannot win this battle against poverty. Otherwise we risk giving credence to those who claim that 1994 was a false dawn for the majority in terms of the full enjoyment of socio-economic rights.

We call on you to join hands with us as we work hard to successfully refute such sentiments. This we can only do with success by extending appropriate interventions that give dignity to our people through concrete economic opportunities.

I thank you once more for inviting us to this dinner.