



**KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE**

SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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**SPEECH BY KZN MEC FOR SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE DR  
NTUTHUKO MAHLABA ON THE OCCASION OF AFRICA DAY  
CELEBRATIONS**

**RIVERVIEW SPORTS GROUNDS**

**GREATER KOKSTAD LM**

**HARRY GWALA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY**

**Theme: "Celebrating 30 Years of Freedom: Building a Better Africa  
and a Better World"**

**24 MAY 2024**

*Programme Director*

*KZN DSAC Acting Head of Department; Dr Thobile Sifunda*

*Harry Gwala District Mayor; His Workship Cllr Zamo Nxumalo*

*Greater Kokstad Mayor; His Workship Cllr Lwanda Madikizela*

Good morning to you all. Sanibonani. Molweni

Today, we gather to celebrate the 10th Africa Day during Africa Month, a significant occasion that coincides with South Africa's observance of 30 years of democracy.

This year's theme, "**Celebrating 30 Years of Freedom: Building a Better Africa and a Better World,**" resonates deeply with our collective journey and aspirations as a continent.

**We also gather here in this town of Kokstad in remembrance of our departed Paralympian Zanele Situ who passed on in November last year.**

Driving in through Kokstad, I have been very impressed with the rapid development of the town. The N2/R56 Interchange is a game changer for



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the town in terms of economy, tourism and logistics even after the N2 has been diverted from passing through this beautiful town.

We are proud of the ANC government that has prioritised infrastructure development to enable job creation, economic growth and skills transfers through building of road infrastructure like the one I have just observed. As former Premier Ambassador Sbu Ndebele once eloquently opined that: ***“It’s the roads that build economy and not the economy that builds roads”***

Speaking of infrastructure, since the 2010 FIFA World Cup our Government continues to build and upgrade world class stadiums to serve professional and amateur sport. These include the iconic Moses Mabhida Stadium, Sugar Ray Xulu Stadium, King Zwelithini Stadium, Princess Magogo Stadium, Harry Gwala Stadium, Msunduzi Athletics Stadium, KwaMsane Sports Complex, Ndumo Sport Complex.

Just a few hours ago we have just opened to the public the Shayamoya Library in Ward 4. This R37,7 million facility is one of our biggest libraries and it joins a host of others that we ave built across the province.

Over 100 libraries have been built in KwaZulu-Natal since the dawn of democracy to increase access to education opportunities. Free wi-fi connection is available at 164 public libraries and 38 mini-libraries for the blind have been established across the Province.

For this Shyamoya Library, 27 local community members have benefitted in this project including the local suppliers that were utilised on the project. They also received training/skills that they will use even after this project which will assist them to support their families.

During the construction period of the project the employment of local labour was intensified to achieve the objective of poverty alleviation within the area and as three (3) wards benefitted from the development of the project. The development will improve the culture of learning through the services that will be provided by library when it is operational and that include the circulation of books, free internet, gaming for kids and many other amenities.

This is the second library were are opening in the local municipality following the opening of Franklin Modular Library in December 2022. We build libraries because of our love of books and what they mean to our world. **Africa today need more book than ever!** This is the same inspiration and discipline with the books that we should inculcate into our children and young people.

We are building libraries like these with the aim of preserving not only the knowledge and the information, but to empower the future generations that come after us. **This is part of Vision 2063 of a reading AFRICA!**



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These are the legacies we need to leave to our children – *imitapo yolwazi eyifa elingasoze labuna!* To quote **Isithwalandwe uBaba u-Oliver Tambo** when he said: *“The children of any nation are its future. A Country, a movement, a person that does not value its youth and children does not deserve its future,”*

Books are the foundation of many of our institutions. They are what one author called our **'fixed capital,'** more vital than any professor, any classroom, or laboratory.

When I was growing up I often would hear those ahead of me, especially the wise elderly, saying: *“imfundo ayikhulelwa”* or *“ufunda uze ufe”* colloquially meaning that *“you are never too old to learn.”*

A library is therefore a repository for the whole of human knowledge, and we must safeguard it for future generations. It is ours to protect and to preserve. *Ngiyanxusa futhi ngiyacela ukuba lomtapo wolwazi (library) niwuphathise kuhle kwezikhali zamantungwa. Niwuvikele* from being vandalised.

Silapha namuhla eNanda singuHulumeni kaANC sithunywe uMongameli **uCyril Matamela Ramaphosa** noNdunankulu wethu esiFundazweni **uMama uNomusa Dube** kanye neNhlango ebusayo, iNhlango yabantu *uAfrican National Congress* ukuzonikhumbuza ukuthi kuyini ukuphila ngaphansi **kweNkululeko nobuAfrika.**

Lolusuku silubamba ngenyanga esithi ngayo eyaseAfrica – AFRICA MONTH elandela i-FREEDOM MONTH iphinde yandulele i-YOUTH MONTH. Nalapha eKokstad silethe yona lenkululeko nokuzigqaja ngobu-Afrika.

Inyanga lena yeNkululeko esiphuma kuyona u-April – **FREEDOM MONTH** – isikhumbuza okuningi osekwenziwe uHulumeni kaANC ukubumbanisa abantu. Ukuhlangana nje kanjena sizojabula kwakungabakhwekazi ngezikhathi zobandlululo lapho sasingavunyelwe nhlobo ukuhlangana sibe abantu abayiqoqo ngaphandle kokuthola imvume ngaphansi **kweGATHERING ACT.** Sasihlukaniswe nawumthetho **weGROUP AREAS ACT.**

**INKULULEKO** isho ukuthi siyahlangana senze okungokwethu okuhlanganisa thina kuphinde kujabulise thina. **INKULULEKO** isho ukuthi siyagqoka kanjena imifaniswano yethu ngaphandle kokuqalaza ukuthi ubani uzothini – lokhu esithi phecelezi **FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION.**

## HISTORY AND BACKGROUND



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Therefore, Ladies and Gentlemen, Africa Day holds profound importance in fostering social cohesion and championing the vision of a united Africa. It is an annual commemoration of the foundation of the Organisation of African Unity on 25 May 1963, which today is known as the African Union.

This day is celebrated across the African continent and around the world by the diaspora. It provides an opportunity to celebrate African diversity and success, and to highlight the cultural and economic potential that exists within our continent.

On 25 May 1963, African nations united to form the Organisation of African Unity, a precursor to the African Union (AU). This union marked the determination of the people of Africa to free themselves from foreign domination and exploitation. The goal of Africa Day is to mark each year the onward progress of the liberation movement and to symbolise our collective resolve for freedom and self-determination.

As we celebrate Africa Day, we are reminded of the visionary efforts of leaders like former Premier Sbu Ndebele, who played a pivotal role in recognizing the African Renaissance and the creation of NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) in 2002. Their contributions have laid the groundwork for a unified Africa that strives for economic growth, social development, and political stability.

A united Africa signifies a stronger, more influential voice on the global stage. It means a continent that can leverage its vast resources, rich cultures, and innovative potential to foster sustainable development and peace.

As Thomas Sankara once said, ***“We must learn to live the African way. It’s the only way to live in freedom and with dignity.”*** This unity is not just for Africa, but for building a better world where all people can thrive in harmony.

Our celebration today also emphasises the importance of addressing critical issues that impact our continent. The economy, finance, agriculture, energy, tourism, education, technology, space exploration, and artificial intelligence are key areas where we must focus our efforts to ensure a prosperous future. By investing in these sectors, we are laying the foundation for a resilient and competitive Africa.



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Moreover, this celebration showcases the rich culture and arts of various African countries. Our cultural parade today is a testament to the vibrant and diverse heritage that unites us.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the various African groups that participated in the cultural parade. Your contributions enrich our celebration and remind us of the beauty and strength found in our diversity.

In closing, let us embrace this Africa Day with renewed commitment to building a better Africa and a better world. Let us honour the legacy of our forebears by continuing to strive for unity, freedom, and prosperity for all. Together, we can achieve greatness and ensure that the next 30 years are marked by even greater progress and harmony.

### ON ELECTIONS

Ngithanda ukudlulisa umyalezo kaKhongolose sisaya okhethweni othi sonke masiphume sigqugquzele wonke umuntu nemindeni yethu ukuthi baphume bayovota.

***Phambili ngeAfrika, Phambili!***

***Phambili ngobumbano, Phambili!***

***Phambili ngoHulumeni onakekelayo, Phambili!***

***Phambili ngempilo engcono, Phambili***

***Siyaya okhethweni, Siyaya!***

Thank you for your attention.

Siyabonga, Siyabulela.