

**Draft Keynote Address by the Acting Premier of the Northern Cape,
MEC Bentley Vass, at the Provincial Freedom Day Commemoration**

Oliphantshoek, Gamagara Municipality

27 April 2023

Programme Director

Members of the Executive Council

Members of the Provincial Legislature

Executive Mayor, Mayors and Councillors present

Senior government officials

**Community members of the Gamagara Municipality in particular and
the Northern Cape as a whole**

Members of the media

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

DUMELANG, GOOD MORNING, GOEIE MORE

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to address the people of this beautiful part of the province on such a historic day. We celebrate this day, with the people of a district that has contributed to shaping the country and the province that we have today.

As we celebrate the 29th Anniversary since the first democratic elections, we look back to that momentous day when for the very first time, the people of this country were able to vote in, their Government, we look

back at the many strides that we have made to build the South Africa that we want.

Ek glo Dames en Here, dat daar is soms van ons, wat kan nog daardie dag onthou. Today we also pay tribute to the heroes and heroines who fearlessly sacrificed their lives in pursuit of a free and democratic South Africa. Before we get into the proceedings of the day, I ask that we observe a moment of silence in memory and in honour of those who sacrificed their lives.

Dames en Here, Vandag onthou ons daardie geskiedkundige oomblik. Ons vier ons triomf oor geïnstusionaliseerde rassisme, onderdrukking, staatsgeborgde geweld en die gedwonge verdeling van ons mense op grond van ras of etnisiteit.

We gather here under the theme, 'Consolidating and Safeguarding Democratic Gains' which appropriately coincides with the commemoration of the 27th Anniversary of the enactment of the constitution as the Supreme law of our beautiful country.

Programme Director, we have as the ANC Government, together with fellow South Africans made significant progress in transforming from an apartheid state into a democratic one. We are, as a nation, stronger together and have more in common than that which divides us. We will continue to call on each and everyone one of you to work together with

Government in building the South Africa and the Northern Cape we all desire.

It is important, that whilst we acknowledge that a lot more still needs to be done, to reflect on the advances that we have made in emancipating all South Africans and restoring their human dignity.

Today, every child, regardless of their race is guaranteed a child support grant by this Government, free education from Primary School up until when they go to University, and in poverty stricken areas, with nutritious meals at schools which this ANC-Led Government offers to millions of young people in the country, including right here in Oliphantshoek.

Ladies and Gentleman

As Provincial Government, we continue to work together with all our Municipalities to go back to basics and accelerate the delivery of services to our people. In this Municipal area we are working with Bloem Water, to find lasting solutions to the persistent water issues that you, as the community are confronted with.

A few weeks ago, together with the Premier, Dr. Zamani Saul and the Minister of Water and Sanitation, Minister Mchunu, we announced the completion of the first phase of the biggest water project in the Northern Cape, namely the Vaal Gamagara Project, which is situated in this Municipal area. The Minister also launched the second phase which will ensure that more households have access to uninterrupted supply of

water. We are working together with the Mines in the area to ensure the satisfactory completion of this major project.

Ek kan dus bevestig dat ons program om die waardigheid van ons mense te herstel deur hulle toegang tot basiese dienste te gee, is op koers en ons sal verseker dat ons voortgaan om die voorsiening van skoon lopende water te prioritiseer en te intensiveer, elektrisiteit en behuising aan al ons gemeenskappe.

Every poor household is guaranteed to receive at least a minimum standard of basic services, and this has reduced the burden on many households and it has brought relief to poor households. This has ensured that no citizen is denied the right to basic services.

We continue to encourage community members who qualify to, and are not registered on the indigent register of your municipality, to do so. This will allow you access to these free basic services. In the same breath we encourage community members who are able to pay for services, to do so regularly and on time. Businesses are also encouraged to pay for their services.

Programme Director, As Government we continue to make a clarion call to our communities to work with us to ensure that we at all times safeguard all our Infrastructure. Cable theft has a negative impact on our economy and we call on communities to report cases of theft to law enforcement agencies.

Of great concern to the Northern Cape Provincial Government is the increase in our crime statistics. Crime in all its manifestations, is a direct violation of another person's democratic right. That is why we continue to intensify our efforts to create a safer province and country for all who live in it.

Ladies and Gentleman we are encouraged that the President, Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa, signed into law the three pieces of legislation to strengthen the criminal justice system, promoting accountability across the state thereby supporting survivor.

It cannot be business as usual that we today live in a society in which women and children do not feel safe, and are unable to enjoy this freedom that we today celebrate.

Abuse against women and children goes against the founding values of our constitutional democracy which is built on human rights, human dignity and equality for all. Women and Children living in Welgelee, Ditlounge, Makalani, and many other settlements in our Province deserve to live in a society where they feel safe and are free.

Dames en here Die dwelmpandemie in gemeenskappe is besig om ons jongmense te verwoes en die hartseer werklikheid is dat nie net diegene wat hulle aan hierdie dinge toegee nie, ly, maar ook die families en breër gemeenskappe.

We are as Provincial Government intensifying our fight against the abuse of drugs amongst our young people, through the newly established Department of Youth, Women, Persons living with disabilities, e-Government and Communication and the Department of Social Development, we are working on a number of programmes that will ensure that our young people are kept off the streets and away from drugs and alcohol.

Programme Director, as we embark on this journey of rebuilding our country and consolidating our democratic gains, economic transformation will be at the very centre because freedom must also be about the improvement of the material conditions of our people. In doing so, we will make sure that all disadvantaged groups will progressively play a part in the means of production in the economy.

As a Province we continue to make progress in the fight against unemployment. This has seen the Province recording a decline in the unemployment rate. We are, together with our social partners, making available Programmes which are aimed at upskilling young people in the Province.

The skills gap in our Province is directly linked to the levels of unemployment, and that is why we will continue to urge young people to take up these opportunities.

The Provincial Government of the Northern Cape will ensure that we empower and recognize community arts centres that had made progress in addressing the challenges of service delivery in the field of arts and culture. Community Arts Centres have proven their worth and form the core element in community development in South Africa.

Therefore, as government it is imperative that we support our Community Arts Centres with the necessary equipment and skills to promote and enhance social cohesion and nation building. Community Arts Centres (CAC) were established to provide opportunities for participation in the arts, to create opportunities for employment to provide cultural enrichment and to generate income.

There are currently 37 Community Arts Centres registered with the Department of Sport , Arts and Culture in the Northern Cape . This year 5 Community Arts Centres from John Taolo Gaetsewe will be receiving support . Of the 5 Centres 4 will receive funding to the value of R 50 000 and one will receive equipment to the value of R 30 000. A handover of R50 000 each to Bana ba Thari Youth Service Centre in Tsineng village from Joe Morolong Municipality and TThe Workshop ko Kasi in Mothibistad Gasegonyana Municipality Workshop ko Kasi in Mothibistad Gasegonyana Municipality will receive their cheques.

Provincial Government has also entered into a partnership with merSETA which is aimed at skills development, job creation and

awarding of bursaries to young people. We will soon advertise these and encourage the young people of Oliphantshoek and the Province as a whole to again take up these opportunities.

Programme Director, we have as, Provincial Government committed to granting support to our Grade 12 learners to ensure that we better the quality of our Grade 12 results. Provincial Government identified the need to modernise the education system, hence we have as introduced e-learning as part of our support programme.

All Grade 12 learners are being furnished with education tablets that have been loaded with software and that do not need any data to operate. The quality of Grade 12 results places learners in a better position to succeed in life.

Ladies and Gentleman

We continue to give support to our SMME'S, as we understand the important role that they play within our Economy. The R75-million Northern Cape Blended SMME Fund is a joint initiative of the Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDaT) and the National Empowerment Fund (NEF) and is part of a broader enterprise development programme. We are encouraging people to apply for this grant.

Ons voorsien ook dat daar vir klein besigheide voorsiening gemaak sal word in die Kathu Nywerheidspark wat deur die Nywerheidsontwikkelingskorporasie (IDC) en maatskappye in die mynbousektor ondersteun word. Die park se infrastruktuur sal kleiner maatskappye in staat stel om in 'n posisie te wees om te tender vir leweringskontrakte aan myne.

Programme Director, we remain steadfast in our goal to build a better life for all. We are building on the progress that we have made under our hard earned democracy. As the ANC Government, we will continue to do more to ensure that more people benefit from the fruits of our democracy so that their lives can improve for the better. The values of human dignity, non-racialism and non-sexism, and the rule of law remain important in our nation.

Ladies and Gentleman, it is our firm belief that we can together build a better tomorrow. Our history of division, injustice and suffering must inspire us to build a better and more united nation. Gathered here 29 years after the dawn of our freedom it is important that we, together, take a firm stance on justice and equality for all.

Programme Director allow me to once again invite the people of this district, Province and country to work together with the ANC-Led Government to build the South Africa we want. Let us consolidate and safeguard our democratic gains. We will continue to do more to ensure

that more people benefit from the fruits of our democracy so that their lives can improve for the better.

This freedom, was not given to us on a silver platter, blood was shed. A generational mission was attained. Let us continue to work towards attaining our generational mission of freeing our people from the socio-economical chains that continue to bind them.

I want to conclude by expressing my gratitude to all of you for joining us today as we take this opportunity to celebrate and reflect on 29 years of transition from apartheid to an inclusive functioning and thriving democracy.

I THANK YOU