

**5<sup>TH</sup> OR TAMBO EDU TOUR LECTURE DELIVERED BY DEPUTY MINISTER BAPELA AT  
NELSON MANDELA FREEDOM SQUARE ON THE 22<sup>ND</sup> OF JUNE 2013 IN TANZANIA**

Regional Commissioner;

High Commissioner of South Africa to the United Republic of Tanzania, H E Chiliza;

Your Excellencies and Members of the Diplomatic Corp: Angola, Namibia,  
Mozambique;

The Vice Chancellor;

The Vice Chair of Chama Cha Mapinduzi, Madame Mboni Mhita;

The 2013 OR Tambo Winners;

Academics and Students Communities;

Esteemed Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Habari!!

I bring you warm greetings from our President, Hon. JG Zuma who requested me to deliver this lecture on his behalf. On this occasion of the 5<sup>th</sup> OR Tambo Educational Tour and against the backdrop of the 37<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the June 1976 uprisings, it is relevant that the theme for this lecture has been termed "*Youth leveraging heritage towards better African democracies.*"

I also am happy to be standing in front of you, delivering on this lecture, on the square named after one of Africa's son of the soil, our great leader and icon, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. He is still in hospital, but the good news is that he is responding well to treatment and could be discharged to go home soon. In wishing him well to recover, remember and acknowledge him for who he was and who he is to date. Tata Mandela was a militant youth leader, a volunteer in chief of the 1950s defiance campaign, the African National Congress (ANC) member and Leader, the Freedom Fighter, the Mkhonto we Sizwe (MK) Commander, the Political Prisoner, the Father of our Democracy, the first Black President of South Africa, the Reconciler, the Nation Builder,

the global icon. In quoting him when asked why he is not serving a second term as the President of South Africa he said: *"ANC is not short of leaders. I am who I am today because of the ANC. The ANC made me famous. I was a prisoner who could not talk, could have ended just as that prisoner, but the ANC made me who I am."*

May we all stand up to mediate a silent prayer or moment of silent for the wellbeing of Nelson Mandela.

We are informed that upon arriving, the young South Africans, who form part of this O.R Tambo Edu Tour 2013, the 5<sup>th</sup> tour since 2008, were taken down the history lane by South Africa's High Commissioner, His Excellency T.H. Chiliza. I am sure when he did that, he echoed and narrated the story on what shook the tentacles of the beast – Apartheid on that historic day. To date, the month of June and the 16<sup>th</sup> of June specifically, remain important in the annals of South Africa's liberation history. We are always reminded of the contribution made by young South Africans who braved guns and teargas in a selfless commitment to free themselves and the entire society from oppression.

Programme Director, as South Africans, today we hold numerous rights, because of the sacrifices and the price paid for our liberty by men and women who have fought and died in order to free us from the tyranny of Apartheid. We are here to learn about how they managed to free us, we are here to see for ourselves what they have gone through and we are here to appreciate the contribution of all those who made it possible for them to soldier on. Programme Director, we are gathered here, at the Nelson Mandela Freedom Square, also to honour the plea made by another African legend, Julius Mwalimu Nyerere on this very square during the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFSCO) in 1989 that, *those who have benefited from the facilities acquired during the struggle should not keep the experience that they have gained to themselves, but should rather share it with fellow South Africans and Tanzanians once liberation was obtained. In doing that they will be taking the legacy that brought the very same facilities forward!*

I am therefore pleased that we are marking half a decade this year, in continuing to share with our younger generation, the invaluable story on how we arrived to where we are today. We managed not only to respond to Mwalimu Nyerere's call once, but have successfully done so on five (5) other occasions. As one of the political principals responsible for youth affairs in South Africa, I am pleased to be here with some of the young South Africans and to address the audience of the important journey travelled by South Africans in attaining our liberation. I have no doubt that this tour will enable us to draw inspiring lessons to be used in empowering South African youth and the rest of the youth in the continent.

Esteemed Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of April 1652, Jan Van Riebeeck, a white man from Holland, who brought colonization to South Africa, landed on the shores of the Cape of Good Hope. Not much is known about the company that Jan van Riebeeck represented, but it is important to note that it effectively had a mercenary and para-military history to it. With that, van Riebeeck from Holland, brought 365 years of slavery, racism and oppression against the black people of South Africa. The 6<sup>th</sup> of April – the day on which he arrived - was for decades, under the Apartheid regime, declared as the “*National Day*”. It was a day to celebrate the domination of white people over black people and it was a day in which military parades and all manner of state sponsored celebrations took place to mark the arrival of the colonizers.

The youth of 1976 in South Africa stood up against a brutal regime, knowing fully well the price of their commitment. June 16 1976, marked the end of patience on the part of young South Africans, who said to their elders, *stand aside, we are the future, we are the struggle, we will end Apartheid*. They did so seeking to be part of the change they want to see, and with the vision that whatever the price, their contribution, if it does not liberate them, it would liberate the future generations. These bold actions of many strong youth from Soweto, spread far and wide inspiring other youth across South Africa.

Solomon Mahlangu, who lived in Pretoria, Mamelodi, inspired by his peers in Soweto and inspired by the commitment of Nelson Mandela and other leaders such as Vuyisile Mini, who was hanged 15 years before Mahlangu himself, also became part of this youth revolution that started in Soweto. In 1977, Solomon Mahlangu, having trained for just under a year in Angola, was assigned to form part of the unit that would commemorate the gallantry of the youth of 1976 by bombing a symbol of racism, oppression and slavery - the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria. The instructions given to them were that they should stay low in the Township of Tembisa instead of Soweto, because Soweto could be teeming with Apartheid spies and security forces around the month of June. As is human, after entering South Africa, the unit changed course and decided to go to Soweto. They were detected by a lone policeman, who searched their bags and found ammunition. Thereafter a chase and shoot-out ensued. Although Mahlangu had the opportunity to fire at the police and escape, he decided to stay behind to save his comrade, Monty Motloutung who had been injured with a crowbar.

For two years thereafter, Mahlangu was in detention and the African National Congress having learnt from its campaign to save Vuyisile Mini, initiated another more focused and concerted campaign calling for the Apartheid government to commute its death sentence against Solomon Mahlangu. However, the stubborn Apartheid regime ignored calls from President Jimmy Carter of the United States, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the World Council of Churches, amongst a myriad of other pleas from around the world. Despite the international solidarity this campaign generated, the Apartheid regime chose to execute the young Solomon Mahlangu.

It is worth noting that, even when he was held in detention and tortured, Mahlangu remained committed to the struggle. He showed courage and determination in the face of death. He conveyed his message as inscribed at the entrance of the Solomon Mahlangu Campus *"tell my people that I love them and that they must continue the struggle, my blood will nourish the tree that will bear the fruits of freedom"*. With those

words, Mahlangu made it clear to the whole Apartheid regime and to the world that, not even death will break his spirit.

The 6<sup>th</sup> of April 1979 – the very same day that Jan van Riebeeck and his fellow settlers landed in South Africa, known as the “*National day*”, was carefully chosen to hang Solomon Mahlangu at the tender age of 22. Ironically in the South African calendar, April is a month when “Giants” of the struggle fell: O.R. Tambo, Chris Hani and Solomon ‘Kalushi’ Mahlangu. As a nation we owe our hard earned democracy to their altruism and tireless devotion to our country’s freedom.

It is for this reason that the School built here in Mazimbu, is known as the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO). What continue to make SOMAFCO or Mazimbu an even greater and extraordinary gesture, is the fact that the People and the then Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, stood up against pressure and supported South Africa against all odds. Exactly 100 years ago, the South African government enacted the 1913 Land Act that caused for another Solomon from South Africa, Solomon Placitjie to proclaim that “...Awaking on Friday morning, June 20, 1913, the South African Native found himself, not actually a slave, but a pariah in the land of his birth...” This Act by the South African Republic formed part of the great dehumanizing legislation against indigenous South Africans by the colonizers. It took away the rights of black South Africans to own land. It was under the leadership of Julius Mwalimu Nyerere and after Samora Machel warned of the dangers of building a school in Mozambique, that, Mwalimu Nyerere agreed to “GIVE” land to the ANC, so that they could construct infrastructure and prepare for their future in a liberated South Africa. There could be no greater gesture and I believe this has never been matched anywhere else in the world!

The late leader of the ANC, Comrade Chris Hani, when he visited SOMAFCO in 1984 said that “*this was no ordinary college!*” He was indeed right, because alongside the struggle, there was recognition of the significance of education and the need to build

capacity of the future leaders. On this land, where a community pivoting on youth development was constructed – there were classes that were demarcated into a science laboratory, a library, a zoology area, an electronics centre, a service area for mechanical equipment, a horticulture centre, dormitories, teacher quarters, a weather centre, a livestock farm, own electricity supply, sewage and a 20-bed hospital - ironically donated by the Dutch people from Holland. Today, as we enjoy our freedom and democracy, we continue to benefit from the skills of many cadres who were armed with education and training imparted by SOMAFCO.

When delivering the speech at Bundung Solidarity conference a few days after Mahlangu was hanged, O.R Tambo, who was a driving force behind Mazimbu, said of Mahlangu *“In his brief, but full life, Solomon Mahlangu towered like a colossus, unbroken and unbreakable, over the fascist lair. He, on whom our people have bestowed accolades worthy of the hero-combatant that he is, has been hanged in Pretoria like a common murderer. Alone the hangmen buried Solomon, bound by a forbidding oath that his grave shall remain forever a secret, because, in his death the spirit of Solomon Mahlangu towers still like a colossus, unbroken and unbreakable, over the fascist lair...”*

I must ask? Who of the young people that you know, would utter words such as *“tell my people that I love theme...”* in the face of death? Who amongst you, the youth, is that committed to a cause as Mahlangu was? What Mahlangu did shows us that we cannot continue fell trapped by the injustices of this world. He and the rest of 1976 generation understood that theirs is not the struggle of individuals. They laid their lives to liberate the entire society.

Bearing in mind the contribution made by the generation of Solomon Mahlangu and currently having the advantage of a youthful population until at least 2050, how can this present generation use this positively to bring long lasting changes to our society? In South African alone, children and youth below the age of 35, constitute 70% of the population. This situation is similar to that of Tanzania, because both countries have a

youthful population. In the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region, children and youth below the age of 35 constitute 76% of the population. All these occur despite the declining fertility levels. The demographics which I just highlighted clearly indicate that there is a need to direct the energy of this youth population, so that it can benefit their immediate communities and the world.

Importantly, unlike the youth of 1976, the focus of today's youth should be on fighting poverty, high unemployment rate, HIV and Aids, poor education, increased exposure to risky lifestyles and behaviours such as the scourge of alcohol and drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, violence and conflict etc. This is essential considering the fact that the majority of these youth account for the large share of the working population, and if their problems are not attended to, they will not be able to contribute to the economies of their societies and broadly to the world's development agenda.

On this basis, in preparing for this demographic window, our President, Jacob Zuma, as the political champion for amongst youth development, will be championing implementation of the country's youth development agenda. He has mandated that a Presidential Youth Working Group be established to afford him an opportunity to interact with the relevant key stakeholders in the youth development space. It will be a platform for various sectors: government, civil society, private and Institutions of higher learning. The PYWG will be guided by the **BIG FIVE** priorities, namely:

- 1. Youth Economic Participation** aimed at responding to the problem of youth unemployment through job creation with a particular focus on entrepreneurship.
- 2. Education and Skills Development** focused on improving the quality of education and skilling many youth who are out of school and unemployed.
- 3. Substance Abuse and Violence Prevention** addresses the scourge of alcohol and drug abuse as well prevention of violence against women and children.
- 4. National Youth Service** encourages the youth to be skilled and to volunteer their services to their communities, so that they contribute to social cohesion and nation building.

- 5. Professionalisation Youth Work** through recognising youth work as a profession and building capable youth sector with qualified service providers who are able to deliver efficient and effective services to the youth.

The youth of 1976 were able to prioritise education under the worst of the conditions they experienced. They have laid a better foundation for us. What prevents today's youth from tackling poverty and many other ill conditions in a better environment already created for them? Why are today's youth not taking advantage of the available resources to fully develop their own potential, so that they can in turn contribute effectively to the global community? Our Icon, former President Nelson Mandela once said "*the world is in your Hands.*" This was acknowledgement of the contribution made by his generation as well as the generation of Solomon Mahlangu. He implied that this generation need to take over from where they have left.

With the Ministries and agencies for youth development established across SADC and the continent, it is clear that there is commitment and the political will to prioritise youth development through empowering and anchoring the youth as accountable and credible leaders for development in the global arena. In doing that, we cannot underestimate the importance of education. We emphasise the significance of education for our youth to enable them to make choices that are appropriate at personal, professional and political levels. We emphasise the importance of education, so that our youth can become stewards of our democracy. We also emphasise the importance of education, to people who are responsible for directing, guiding and serving our youth.

Like, SOMAFSCO which introduced education that defied the Bantu Education system in South Africa by providing "Education with Production", we need today, education that is also skills based, in order to help address the challenge faced by low skilled youth who have dropped out of the mainstream education system in lower schooling levels. This is partnership which South Africa and Tanzania ought to explore in reaching out to many

youth who are often left out of the mainstream. This type of education moulded many of our cadres and can still mould today's generation.

Bearing the socio-political context, the fact that SOMAFCO succeeded academically as it did to connect theory with production, tells us that it is not impossible to produce the youth, who the future will demand. I am informed that upon hand-over of the facilities by the late O.R Tambo, the value of the infrastructure was estimated at a minimum of \$300 million U.S dollars. It is not the monetary value handed over, however what counts the most is the fact that the liberation legacy continues, as the Solomon Mahlangu campus continue to produce the future that African needs.

What is important in the facility and community is the history that I have highlighted. From the grave: Julius Mwalimu Nyerere, Oliver Reginald Tambo, Edward Sokoine, Solomon Mahlangu and many brave men and women we honour today, selflessly gave of themselves to defend our freedom. We recall the glory and sacrifice of all who have set their personal aspirations aside for the democracy of our society. It is important for all Africans to reflect on what it truly means to live in freedom. We owe our past and present, a debt of gratitude for the sacrifices they have made in the defense of our liberation. It is our duty to keep telling this story of how our fallen veterans survived.

Our former President, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela called the youth to be as revolutionary in their fight against unemployment and that the current leadership should leverage this rich history as we propel ourselves forward. Therefore, as students, educators, politicians and scholars; we all need to rise higher and contribute in the building of a developmental state by taking up a task of working hard for a better education for all our school children. We need to create a legacy of youth development, skills development and youth empowerment.

Regional Commissioner, High Commissioner, Vice Chancellor; in the words of Chris Hani the epitaph echoed at the cemetery where many committed lives of many lie reads poignantly, and remains an important reminder not only to us as adults, but also to the

youth here today *"Ours was not for personal glory nor distinction, but for a noble cause of our time - the liberation of the people of South Africa and the entire humanity."*

Talking about the future of the OR Tambo Edu tour, which is in its fifth year, please note that it is growing older and it will soon have double digit to its age, then it becomes a teenager, and becomes a youth at age 14. I hope that at that time, it will be a joint venture between the people and youth, in particular of Tanzania and South Africa. I have raised the matter in my meetings with the Tanzanian youth leadership to establish of the need for them to establish their own Non-Government Organisation or Non-Profit Organisation (NGO/ NPO) such as the SOMAFCO Trust. That organisation will also organise and bring young Tanzanians to South Africa on an Educational Tour, to learn and hear stories by South Africans, on how life was under Apartheid. They can visit heritage sites such as the Apartheid museum and the Robben Island to hear those stories. It is important to have this solidarity continuing.

Yesterday I met with my counterpart the Deputy Minister of Information, Youth Culture and Sports, Hon Amos Makalla to express that similar initiative such as the SOMAFCO Trust should be established and supported by the government of the United Republic of Tanzania. We will be collaborating on a number of projects relating to youth empowerment and we can learn from each other on how we can better invest in the future of our youth, include supporting this OR Tambo Edu Tour as well as the corresponding tour to South Africa.

We are as six governments: South Africa, Mozambique, Tanzania, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and Angola, working with UNESCO in establishing a centre that will house the history of the liberation struggles of our six countries. Tanzania will be the Head Quarter as it housed and gave us head offices, support and military training, when everybody could not do it. The Southern Africa Liberation Heritage Route will also be constructed. The SOMAFCO Trust project will be integrated and not swallowed into this grand plan.

The winners of the O.R Tambo Edu Tour 2013 and previous tours, should take with them profound lessons of discipline and selflessness of Solomon Mahlangu and his heroic generation. If comrade 'Kalushi' was not disciplined and did not love the people of his country as he did, the story of our liberation could have been different. We urge the youth of South Africa and the Continent to strive and emulate these '*Giants*' and actively endeavor to surpass the great deeds which these freedom fighters achieved. Let us rebuild that caliber of discipline by dedicating ourselves to fighting for excellence in our struggle to achieve the broad range of skills required in this fast changing economy.

To celebrate the life and sacrifice of Solomon Mahlangu is to remember where we come from, because his spirit, like that of O.R. Tambo, Chris Hani, Vuyile Mini and others is not dead. His blood will continue to nourish the seeds of freedom, peace and prosperity, which are germinating throughout South Africa and the Continent.

I would like to conclude by thanking the SOMAFSCO Trust for this invaluable initiative and the sponsors and supporters of this OR Tambo 5<sup>th</sup> Edu Tour, namely:

- The National Youth Development Agency (the Presidency);
- The Department of Arts and Culture;
- The National Heritage Council;
- Sowetan Aggrey Klaaste Foundation;
- Transnet;
- SABC (Metro FM & SA FM);
- Independent Development Trust;
- Number 43 Trelawney Park

I also wish to thank the People and the Government of Tanzania and the South African High Commission to the United Republic of Tanzania, for their hospitality.

Aluta Continua!

Asante Sana!