



KEY-NOTE ADDRESS BY MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS, MRS EDNA MOLEWA, AT THE NELSON MANDELA DAY CELEBRATIONS WITH THE GIFT OF THE GIVERS, ALEXANDRA, JOHANNESBURG, 18 JULY 2013

Programme Director, Cde Sizakele Nkosi Morabela

Deputy Minister of Social Development, Ms B. M. Ntuli

Dr. Imtiaz Sooliman, Founder and Chairman of Gift of the Givers Foundation

MMC Cllr Dan Bovu, of the City of Johannesburg Council

Ladies and gentlemen

I am particularly pleased and excited to be with you on this big occasion not only for our country but for the entire world. I am honoured to have received the invitation from one of the shining lights of our country, the Gift of the Givers. We should be proud as South Africans to be joined by the world in celebrating not only the life of the icon of the world, but also his ideals of building a better world for all.

This day, the 18th of July, has become known to us and the world as the Nelson Mandela International Day. It has become very important to us as South Africans and indeed the world community at large. As you all know, the 192 Member States of the United Nations General Assembly overwhelmingly agreed to declare this an

international day in recognition of the long history of Tata Nelson Mandela's leading role in and support of Africa's struggle for liberation and continental unity. This day also recognises his outstanding contribution to the creation of a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic South Africa. Today we celebrate his example of dedication to the values that promote conflict resolution, improved race relations, human rights and gender equality.

As an activist, Tata Nelson Mandela helped bring an end to apartheid and has been a global advocate for human rights. As a member of the African National Congress for over 70 years, he was a leader of both peaceful protests and armed resistance against the white minority's oppressive regime in a racially divided South Africa. His actions landed him in prison for nearly three decades and made him the face of the anti-apartheid movement both within our country and internationally.

When he was released in 1990, he participated in the deliberations towards the eradication of apartheid and in 1994 became the first black President of the Republic of South Africa; forming a non-racial government to oversee the country's transition. He embraced everybody, including those who sent him to prison and deprived him of 30 years of his life. He preached peace, prosperity and a better life for all. Even after his retirement from politics since 1999, he has remained a devoted champion and a living symbol for peace and social justice not just in his own nation, but around the world as well.

Dr. Sooliman, ladies and gentlemen, as we're gathered here today, we are pretty aware and, of course, saddened that he has been lying in hospital now for more than a month. To us as a nation and indeed the entire world, his hospitalisation has been traumatic and full of anxiety. But, as we all know, President Zuma has rallied all of us to pray for this icon; to ask God to keep him as long as possible, even though we all know we can't get enough of him. Today, we should be grateful to God that He has allowed us to

celebrate this day with Tata. Even though he is lying in hospital, we must be grateful for the fact that he is still alive as we celebrate his big day. It is a big day for all of us too.

Therefore, Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me to send get well wishes to this icon, on behalf of all of us. May the Good Lord extend His hand upon him and allow him more time with us.

At his inauguration on the 1st of May 1994, Tata Mandela directed us to love each other by saying, and I quote: "Never, never and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another and suffer the indignity of being the skunk of the world".

Later, he uttered these words: "Let there be work, bread, water and salt for all". All these words will remain an inspiration to us and we must continue to strive for a better life for all.

*The overarching objective of Mandela Day is to inspire individuals to take action to help change the world for the better, and in doing so build a global movement for good. Ultimately, it seeks to empower communities everywhere. Cabinet designated the theme of Mandela Day 2013 as **"Take Action; Inspire Change; Make Every Day a Mandela Day."***

Individuals and organisations are free to participate in Mandela Day as they wish. However, everyone must adhere to the ethical framework of "service to one's fellow human". In this manner, we will be paying a befitting tribute to Madiba, the man who laid the foundation for nation building and reconciliation in our country.

It is therefore encouraging to have individuals like you who have come here today to do exactly what Tata Mandela has fought for throughout his life. I am pleased that you have responded to Tata Mandela's call to inspire change and make a difference in your community and to your fellow citizens. We all know and acknowledge how your organisation answers this call of doing good not just here at home, but exactly in the same way that our beloved 95 year-old does, all over the world. Your footprint is the footprint of our beloved Tata and country.

*Thank you very much all of you for the work you do; keep responding to Tata's call until we have truly built "**a better life for all**". I hope yours will be an example for us to have organisations like yours , organisations that are dedicated to respond to Tata Mandela's call and inspire change in our communities.*

I therefore want to thank the Gift of the Givers for the sterling work they have been doing for our country and the world for the past thirteen years. It is indeed more encouraging to have this organisation in our country as the largest disaster response NGO of African origin on the African continent.

Without any waste of time, as we are not here to listen to speeches but to work, I want to thank all of you for your participation in this event. Let's do it for our fellow citizens and let's do it for Madiba.

I thank you.

