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COMMENT



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# Future is in our hands

WE ALL want to leave our mark on this world, to know that our life mattered.

What does it mean to leave a legacy? It means putting a stamp on the future, and making a contribution to future generations. We want to leave a legacy because we want to feel that our life mattered.

South Africa belongs to all its people and the future of our country is our collective future. Making it work is our collective responsibility. All South Africans seek a better future for themselves and their children.

This year's Africa Month is celebrated under the theme: "The year of Arts, Culture and Heritage: in the year of Charlotte Maxeke.

Africa Day is intended to celebrate and acknowledge the successes of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU, now the AU) from its creation on May 25, 1963, in the fight against colonialism and apartheid, as well as the progress that Africa has made, while reflecting upon the common challenges the continent faces.

The AU, comprised of 53 member states, has brought together the continent to collectively address the challenges it has faced, such as armed conflict, climate change, and poverty.

South Africa is an integral part of the continent. Therefore, Africa Month programmes aim to strengthen the sociocultural, economic and political relations among African nations. We understand our national interest as being intrinsically linked to the continent's stability, unity and prosperity.

South Africa's transition from apartheid to a democratic state has been a success. In the past 25 years, we have built democratic institutions, transformed the public service, extended basic services, stabilised the economy and taken our rightful place in the family of nations. Despite these successes, too many people are trapped in poverty and we remain a highly unequal society. Too few South Africans work, the quality of school education for the majority is poor and our state lacks capacity in critical areas. Despite significant progress, our country remains divided, with opportunity still shaped by the legacy of apartheid. In particular, young people and women are denied the opportunities to lead the lives that they desire. Our Constitution obliges all of us to tackle these challenges.

When we work together, even small personal actions when put together can make a big difference, helping us to overcome huge challenges. Communities have shown that they can act to address a crisis, with the government, private sector and individuals taking measures and changing behaviours in response to the pandemic, proving that working together is significant.

Hence, deciding on saving water and protecting our infrastructure as our heritage, requires us to live in a way that we want remembered.

Our country has a fast growing population where the demand for clean water is increasing every day. Therefore, we should use water sparingly at all times as part of our legacy.

As the challenge of water scarcity has rapidly increased, so has water infrastructure vandalism.

The National Development Plan (NDP 2030) states that before 2030, all South Africans will have affordable, reliable access to sufficient safe water and hygienic sanitation.

To achieve this, working together is essential. We can save water and protect our infrastructure for future generations.

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