



INTERNET ARTICLE

Telling our stories to unite our diverse cultures

25 September 2014

South Africans from all racial groups yesterday the 24th, gathered in North West to reflect and inter-relate culturally to celebrate their 20th Year Anniversary Heritage Day.

Arriving at the Orkney Stadium, situated in the mining small town of Orkney, singing both traditional and liberation struggle songs, South Africans were dressed in their Boere, Indian, Sotho, Nguni, XiTsonga and Tshivenda traditional regalia.

On the day, 24 September 2014, South Africa celebrated Heritage Day under the theme, "Celebrating 20 Years of Democracy: Tell your story that moves South Africa Forward!" The theme encourages South Africans to tell their stories as part of celebrating 20 years of democracy.

Heritage Day on 24 September was declared a public holiday under the Public Holidays Act of 1994. During Heritage Month South Africans are encouraged to celebrate and embrace the country's historical inheritance, languages, spirituality and sacred sites, diverse cultures, indigenous food and traditional art forms. It is a day on which South Africans thought outside politics and identified themselves as the rainbow nation.

From the 20 Year Review it is clear that South Africa has made great progress in ensuring equal rights. While telling the great story of struggle and victory, Deputy President Ramaphosa, standing in for President Jacob Zuma, said South Africans are still prone to stereotyping each other.

Although much has been accomplished since 1994, more work remains to be done, especially towards building an inclusive, equal society.

The stories told by the nation related mostly to the years of struggle, hardship, pain, misfortune, hatred and finally love and peace at the attaining of freedom.

Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa told the nation a great story of struggle and victory which must commit South Africans to work together to foster nation building and social cohesion.

South Africa is heading in the right direction of bridging the racial gap, where all people will be bound by a common diverse heritage, says Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa. "Although there is still more we have to do to build bridges, we are headed in the right direction. We are celebrating a rich, proud and diverse heritage. Although we may speak different languages, practice different beliefs, engage in different cultural practices and tell different stories, we are bound together by a common African heritage," he said.

Deputy President Ramaphosa said "We are reluctant to trust those who do not look like us or who don't speak like us – or who do not belong to the same economic stratum. Traditions and



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value systems are still influenced by the spatial, economic, social and ideological distortions of colonialism and apartheid”.

Apartheid social engineering forced the nation to reside in racial and ethnic enclaves. “It forced us to grow up with those who were assumed to be the same as us, to eat the same food, to play and, most absurdly, to love and marry according to race. We were forced never to see beyond the boundaries of race. We could not see beyond the gender roles that we were assigned. We could not live in each other’s spaces and could not learn about our diverse ways of life,” he said.

Ike Motsapi

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