

**ADDRESS BY
PREMIER OF KWAZULU NATAL SIHLE ZIKALALA DURING THE MEN IN
UNIFORM MARCH HELD TO LAUNCH MEN'S MONTH 2018 IN DURBAN
ON 09JULY 2019**

Programme Director;
Chairperson of the Men's Forum MEC Mxolisi Kaunda;
Members of the Executive Council;
Mayor of eThekweni Cllr. Zandile Gumede;
Members of the Faith-Based Community;
Leaders of Civil Society;
Honoured Guests;
Members of the Media;
Ladies and Gentlemen;

I greet you all!

We have just witnessed the march this historic march through the streets of Durban in the eThekweni Municipality which seeks to draw attention to two issues.

The first is that as the whole world is aware, the Month of July holds great significance to those who believe in the noble idea of human rights and social justice for all human beings.

This month is important because on the 18th of July 1918 in a village of Mvezo in the Eastern Cape, a boy was born who grew up like other children, but who one day was destined to become a leader of the world.

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, the founding President of the Republic of South Africa who was born 101 years ago, represents in our view the greatest heights that one can rise to represent your species of humanity.

In recognition of Madiba's selfless contribution to the betterment of humanity, ten years ago this year, in December 2009, the United Nations declared 18 July International Nelson Mandela Day. This is the first honour paid to a human being by the UN.

On that day, the whole world is asked to spend at least 67 minutes of our time performing service or duty to humanity or our community. This is because of the 67 years that Madiba spent in the fight for peace, justice in South Africa and the world.

Secondly, we are also here because in view of the major social ills and challenges that we face as a society, as a country we have declared July Men's Month.

Our government working together with all stakeholders in our province, has devised a programme that we are unveiling today to mark Men's Month.

The month-long Men's Month programme will involve a series of engagements with men on current issues facing them. Today's parade, which was defined by the presence of Men in Uniform, will be followed by many other activities around the province led by MECs and District Mayors working very closely with members of Civil Society and the Faith Based Movement.

This will include dialogues, visiting shelters for abused men, welcoming boys from initiation schools and izimbizo in the length and breadth of the province. Among the key messages we have identified for the month are the following:

- Sukuma Sakhe Ndoda
- KZN men advocating gender equality
- Men taking responsibility for their health and well-being
- Breaking the silence against gender-based violence

- Strengthening partnerships with a range of stakeholders to deal with challenges confronting men and the society.

One of the highlights of Men's Month will therefore be the celebration of Tata Nelson Mandela's universal legacy, but also retracing the steps that Madiba travelled in the 1960s here in KwaZulu Natal and what we can learn in order to lead society in various ways.

We must never forget that Madiba has longstanding historical links to KwaZulu Natal through the following events:

- The Manaye Hall in Mbali in Pietermaritzburg where in 1962, Mandela made his last public speech as a free man at the All-in-Africa Conference before being arrested;
- The other one is the Mandela Capture Site near Howick where he was arrested on the 5th of August 1962;
- The third is Ohlange High School in Inanda, Durban where Madiba cast his historic first vote in our democratic elections in 1994.

Programme Director;

As we celebrate Men's Month it may be important also to reflect on some lessons that Madiba through his own life had for men in particular, but the entire humanity in general including women and youth.

In an article written for the Daily Maverick as part of celebrating the centenary of Madiba during Mandela Month 2018, one of the ANC's intellectuals, respected academic Raymond Suttner studied Madiba as a Man and his reflection on masculinity.

Prof Suttner says and I quote:

"In remembering Nelson Mandela, in the month of his birth, it is valuable to return to the neglected question of what he has to teach us about masculinity, what it means to be and various ways of being a man.

Of relevance to the social ills that we are seeking to tackle in KwaZulu Natal, Prof Suttner says further:

“South Africa remains a violent country marred by aggression and violence, mainly perpetrated by boys and men. Across all population groups there remains a tendency to “solve problems” through recourse to force. An enquiry into Mandela’s legacies, especially what he represented as a man may have relevance in providing a role model and an alternative notion of masculinity.

“One of the features of being a leader, especially one who is a freedom fighter, is that one acts in the present, but needs to bear some sense of what the future holds. This is in order to be ready to advance the cause of freedom under conditions that may differ significantly from that experienced at the time. This means analysing forces at work in order to assess what may change or could lead to change. This requires both firmness on principle and flexibility, in executing principles. This type of leadership is not easy and is often lonely.

Prof Suttner reminds us that Madiba felt that life and the struggle was never finished.

Each generation had its mission. Theirs was to liberate us politically. Ours is to attain radical economic transformation. I wish to add today that this generation has also identified Social Ills, as existential threats to our political and economic freedom. This is why we are here today.

In fact it was Madiba who warned us about this when he said in his Long Walk to Freedom that the struggle was not about to end:

“I have walked that long road to freedom. I have tried not to falter; I have made missteps along the way. But I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb.... I can rest only for a moment, for with freedom come responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not yet ended.”

We learn from Madiba the power of forgiveness and the capacity to change without diminishing oneself.

It will be remembered that Madiba went to prison as the first commander of uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK) the armed wing of the ANC. In prison Mandela set about trying to create conditions for a negotiated settlement and talks between arch enemies at the time who were at daggers drawn in the liberation movement led by the ANC and the apartheid regime.

It is therefore possible to change the situation that we may find ourselves today by properly analysing the conditions under which we may find the best solutions.

It is men who have a responsibility to stand up and protect the women and children who are being abused sexually and physically in our communities today. Amadoda yiwona okufanele abe ngamadlakufa alomzabalazo wokulwa nobugebengu osebudlange ngalendlela ezindaweni zethu.

At the same time Men must own up to their humanity by Attending to their Health, Respecting each other and Helping each other to build better individuals, families and communities.

We take this opportunity to call on the men and boys in our communities to lead by example and to teach our girl children to grow up knowing that it is not normal for one to be beaten up. Ayikho lento yokuthi “Indoda engakushayi yingoba ingakuthandi”.

During Men’s Month 2019 we invite all members of our society to join as we seek to build a better, healthier, safer and prosperous KwaZulu Natal.

Thank You!