



**CLLR ANDREW MAPHETLE – EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF
POTCHEFSTROOM
SASCO SPEECH
SATURDAY 06 MAY 2006
09H00
J CHRIS COETZEE BUILDING
NW UNIVERSITY – POTCHEFSTROOM CAMPUS**

Mr Aubrey Molefe – the Acting Chairperson;

Mr Kenneth Maine – Media and Publicity;

Fellow South Africans;

Comrades and Compatriots;

Chairpersons and Secretaries present;

Distinguished guests;

It is a very exciting opportunity to be invited to the event of this magnitude. Without any waste of time I will like to thank and honour all the young people who lost their lives in the struggle against Apartheid and Bantu Education. My deepest honour goes to comrades Tsietsi Mashinini, Thandisiwe Mazibuku, Thomas Manthata, Sekano Ntoane, Sammy Tloubatla, Aubrey Mokoena, Magauta Molefe, Hlaku Rachidi and Mbuyisa Makhubu for the meeting they led on Sunday 13th June 1976 at Orlando West High (now Phefeni) that led to the unforgettable march on Wednesday 16th June 1976 – a march which changed the education system of South Africa forever.

In 1953 the apartheid regime enacted the brutal act that the world has ever seen - The Bantu Education Act, which established a Black Education Department in the Department of Native Affairs. The role of this department was to compile a curriculum that suited the nature and requirement of black people.

The author of the legislation, Dr HF Vervoerd the then minister of Native Affairs and later a Prime Minister stated that, Natives (blacks) must be taught from an early age that equality with whites is not for them.

Black people were not to receive an education that would lead them to aspire to positions they wouldn't be allowed to hold in society. Instead they were to receive education designed to provide them with skills to serve their own people in the homelands or to work in labouring jobs under whites. But because of the strong leadership skills of the comrades I mentioned earlier – 20 000 young black students assembled at different points throughout Soweto to dismantle those extreme legislations of Verwoed.

Comrades - South Africa is relying on you to become our future leaders. Leaders must have a democratic obligation to account on their actions, to report on significant developments, to ensure that members understand the political direction of the organization and capacities to defend the movement. It is only when members are involved in shaping a particular perspective that they will go out to pioneer its implementation.

James and Lee Boggs in their book entitled “Revolution and Evolution in the Twentieth Century” have this to say to those who undermine inputs from other comrades, and I quote ”The idea of human beings moving simultaneously like a school of fish with no ideas in their heads and without struggling among themselves over these ideas, actually provides the basis for a totalitarian dictator

who manipulates people as masses, turning elections into plebiscites which deliver mandates to the leader.”

Programme Director - Unitary leadership and cadreship of all of us in an organization can possess leadership qualities. It is a good thing as a revolutionary movement that we contain a cream of leadership in all its layers. But there will be cadres who will through an election, are entrusted with a responsibility, ability to lead the organization – and thus deserve respect from all of us, no matter how intelligent we think we are as compared to the elected leadership.

We must regard them as unitary figures in the organization that help to bind the organization together. Our duty as fellow cadres is to ensure that we strengthen their capacity in building organizational unity. Leaders must never be immune from criticism and they should be humble enough to listen to comments and opinions of other comrades.

Criticism and self-criticism in the way in which individuals who are united by common goals, can consciously utilize their differences and limitations – “The negativeness in order to accelerate the positive advance” should be encouraged.

Bearing in mind the political education and revolutionary ethics - we should acknowledge that comrades do not grow at the same pace in terms of political maturity. The collective approach to the question of political education should be that comrades must never take advantage of each other's weaknesses but instead complement each other.

The COSAS slogan of 'each one teach one' is pertinent to this issue. Comrades have a responsibility to share skills among each other and we must all be willing to learn. At one stage SASCO converted its departments into 'collectiveness' in order to encourage the spirit of comrades working with each other in a less hierarchical but complementary manner.

The other thing comrades, that we should encourage is solidarity and internationalism. One of the pillars that made us emerge victors against apartheid was solidarity both at national and international level. It needs comrades to be aware of the global nature of struggles so as to withstand cynical criticism in the name of 'charity begins at home'. Comrades need to be educated that the liberation of others is one's liberation.

In June 16 1996 former President Nelson Mandela inaugurated the National Youth Commission. The Commission has been established through the National Youth Commission Act of 1997 as part of the government's plan to develop a comprehensive strategy to address the problems and challenges facing young women and men in South Africa. It is an expression of government commitment to the full development of the youth. Through this policy, an environment will be created where all stakeholders in youth development can work towards common goals and a better South Africa for all.

The Youth Commission developed The National Strategy to promote economic participation by young people to address one of the most pervasive and influential experiences of young women and men in South Africa today. This is the economic participation, which refers to the involvement in employment and self-employment. Participation in the economy is fundamental to the financial, social and personal development of the youth.

As young people – let us fully understand and take the Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative of the country forward. Potchefstroom needs warriors like you and let us join hands and build a better South Africa. I thank you.