

Response to the debate on the State of The Nation Address

National Assembly, Cape Town, 15 February 2007

Madame Speaker,
Madame Deputy Speaker,
Honourable Deputy President,
Honourable Members,
Fellow South Africans:

I would like to thank all the Honourable Members who participated in the Debate of the State of the Nation Address. Once again I would like to assure the Honourable Members that the Presidency will indeed examine the proposals and requests conveyed by the Honourable Members and respond to them.

In this regard I would like to thank the Hon Bantu Holomisa for his letter to the President dated 12 December, 2006. When I responded to Questions to the President on November 15 last year, the Hon Holomisa made a suggestion concerning the SAPS. I then asked the Hon Member further to elaborate the idea he had expressed and convey it to me.

He did this in the letter of December 12 to which I have just referred. Both the Hon Minister of Safety and Security and I have considered the contents of the letter carefully and will respond to the Hon Member.

Once again I would like to thank the Hon Member for respecting my request and apologise for the delay in responding to him.

As I listened to the 51 speakers who participated in the Debate, often, the poem by W.B. Yeats, The Rose Tree, flashed across my mind.

Here is what it says in the first stanza:

'O words are lightly spoken,'

Said Pearse to Connolly,

'Maybe a breath of politic words

Has withered our Rose Tree;

Or maybe but a wind that blows

Across the bitter sea.'

These words came to mind because in quite a few instances I did indeed think that words had been lightly spoken, and truly politic words, but which in their toxicity could, like the wind that blows across these parts of our country and across the bitter sea to our south, indeed wither our Rose Tree.

Necessarily, therefore, I could not but hear the words that were not lightly spoken when the Hon Pieter Mulder said: "We do not know each other and do not debate with each other. Two minute speeches from this podium are not debates." (Ons ken mekaar nie en debateer nie met mekaar nie. 'n twee minute toesprake van hierdie podium is nie debat nie.)

Similarly, I also heard the words that were not lightly spoken when the Hon Tony Leon said, "as a nation we should spend more time listening to each other, and not be too quick to judge as illegitimate the concerns and expressions of any group."

I could not but hear the words that were not lightly spoken when the Hon Minister of Public Service and Administration said, "We must guard against a habit that is setting in, this habit of painting with very broad strokes, generalising to large groups and entire institutions..."

Neither could I miss the words that were not lightly spoken when the Hon Minister of Education said that, for us to be national agents for social change, "We have to throw off the cloak of self-imposed superiority that seeks to pretend that some of us know it all. We also have to throw off the cloak of imposed inferiority that causes some of us to define ourselves as unequal to deep challenges."

But having listened as carefully as I could both to the words that were lightly spoken and those that were not, I am still uncertain as to whether we have developed sufficient national cohesion enabling all of us to speak in a common vocabulary that we share, whatever language we use.

The Hon Minister of Education recalled what we said in the State of the Nation Address that, "We must today renew our pledge, to speak together of freedom, to act in partnership to realise the happiness for all that should come with liberty, to work together to build a South Africa defined by a common dream, to say, together, in action - enough of everything that made our country to contain within it and represent much that is ugly and repulsive in human society!"

The Hon Mangosuthu Buthelezi said: "We must respond to the President with a cross-party approach which creates a new spirit of national unity in dealing with these challenges. I appeal to both sides of the aisle to consider the need to join hands to provide our contribution in our respective roles by placing the interest of the country above that of our own parties or politics in general."

The Hon Craig Morkel said, "What we need is to see eye to eye and establish common ground on the basis of our common patriotism..."

And yet, presumably because, like me, he had heard the words that were lightly spoken, the toxic politic words, the Hon Bantu Holomisa said, "The President's appeal for unity and Madame Speaker's theme for the year of deepening the debate, indicate that we as South Africans have not yet found each other on a number of issues."

As I considered these words that were not lightly spoken, I have wondered whether the Hon Holomisa did not here speak to the symptomatic manifestation of another and deeper problem, the problem identified by the Hon Pieter Mulder when he said, "We do not know each other..."

If we do not know one another, we cannot develop the common vocabulary to which I have referred. Without that common vocabulary we will find it very difficult to find one another on the matters on which we disagree.

We will therefore find it difficult to enter into the national partnership we have insisted we need in order to engage in a determined drive to eradicate everything in the common matrimony that still represents that which is ugly and repulsive in human society.

Inevitably, we would have to ask ourselves the question - how many of us heard the Hon Minister of Education when she said that having entered into "a social compact that involves us in leading a process of social transformation", "we need to ask (ourselves) what more can we do, what can we contribute?"

10 years ago, in June 1997, three years into our democracy, I spoke from this same podium and posed questions about whether we could in fact speak of a national consensus or of matters we had defined together as constituting the national interest.

Because of its continuing relevance, I will take the liberty to quote today, in 2007, what I said in 1997, concerned then as I am concerned now, having heard words that are lightly spoken, about whether that most distinctive feature that makes for our superiority relative to the rest of the animal world, our minds, has changed sufficiently for us to be able to act in unity to confront what should be shared challenges.

On June 10, 2007, standing at this same spot, I said:

"In 1986..., Prof Frederick van Zyl Slabbert had resigned his leadership of the Progressive Federal Party as well as his seat in the tri-cameral parliament, arguing that to stay on in that institution would merely serve to lend it legitimacy.

"Recognising the historic importance of this decisive break with the apartheid system, by an Afrikaner, the leadership of the ANC made bold to salute Prof Slabbert as "a new Voortrekker."

"These events are now 10 years behind us. Sadly, for many of us, they, and other landmarks we passed on our road to the new, are but elements of a dim recollection of a past that is dwarfed by the giant heritage of today's democratic society, towards whose birth the "new Voortrekkers" made their own, and not insignificant contribution.

"We say sadly because to forget them, is to put outside our conscious activity, to omit from our daily agendas, the task of confronting the challenge which remains with us - namely, to continue interacting as South Africans, so that we evolve a national consensus about the things which will constitute the most fundamental features of the new South Africa, and thus define the path which we, as a people, must travel together as the new Voortrekkers.

"It is important that we resist the temptation to abandon this path and retreat into a laager, as some recent developments seem to suggest...

"Presumably the question must arise as to whether there can be such a thing as a national consensus on anything, except in the most vacuous sense! Is it possible to have a national agenda - to say in a practical way, that these matters make up the national interest to which all can adhere, regardless of partisan interests!

"Or are the very concepts of national interest and national consensus nothing more than the dream of fools, an illusion best left to the idle who have nothing to do but to build sand castles!

"After all, whereas, daily we proclaim ourselves a nation, that we are a nation, which can share in a national interest, or are we merely a collection of communities that happen to inhabit one geopolitical space!

"We are emerging but only emerging slowly and painfully, out of a deeply fractured society. This is a society which continues to be characterised by deep fissures which separate the black people from the white, the hungry from the prosperous, the urban from the rural, the male from the female, the disabled from the rest.

"Running like a structural fault through it all, and weaving it together into a frightening bundle of imbalance and inequality, is the question of race and colour - the fundamental consideration on which was built South African society for 300 years.

"Is it therefore not an idle thing to imagine that out of this amalgam of inequity, where some have everything and others have nothing, where some instinctively behave as superiors and others know it as a matter of fact that they are seen as inferior, where some must experience change otherwise they perish, and others fear they will perish as a result of change - is it not an idle thing to imagine that out of all this there can emerge a national consensus!

"But may it not be that the question to pose is whether, for it to survive and develop, a society so deeply fractured within itself, does not need to make a conscious, determined and sustained effort to build a national consensus about those matters which will ensure that indeed and in reality, a nation is born!

"The birth of that nation demands that we fundamentally transform our society. The new nation cannot come into being on the basis of the perpetuation of the extraordinary imbalances we have inherited from the past. It cannot be founded on the entrenchment of the apartheid legacy.

"I am certain that all the Honourable Members of this House will agree with these sentiments, regardless of party affiliation.

"After all, we all subscribe to the noble sentiments contained in our Constitution which commits the country "to promote and protect human dignity, to achieve equality and advance human rights and freedoms... to promote non-racialism and non-sexism..."

"I believe that we all supported these constitutional provisions and continue to do so now because we understood that the absence of a settlement containing these objectives would not end the conflict in our country, but would condemn it to a destructive civil war.

If I may say this, it alarmed me greatly that one of us, supposedly a people's tribune, a tribune of the South African people among whom I am privileged to belong, the Hon the Rev K.R.J. Meshoe, could say from this same podium, "we...must warn the President that if violent crime is not drastically reduced or even eradicated in this country, then the privilege of hosting (the) prestigious (2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup) might slip through our fingers, despite the many assurances we have received from Mr Sepp Blatter, who is a friend, admirer and supporter of South Africa."

President Sepp Blatter is indeed a friend, admirer and supporter of South Africa, and a principled fighter for the restoration of the dignity of the African people universally. Regarding the incidence of violent crime in our country and its relevance to the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup, President Sepp Blatter would say that he knows that the people of South Africa would host the world of football in conditions of safety.

He would say that having considered the report of its Technical Committee which assessed the various bids to host the 2010 Tournament, and which drew attention to the challenge of safety and security in our country, the Executive Committee of FIFA decided, deliberately and consciously, that our country should host the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup.

He would say that he has told others in the world, who have been greatly encouraged by remarks emanating from our country, such as those made two days ago by the Hon the Rev K.R.J. Meshoe, a tribune of my people, that the decision has been made - the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup will not slip through the fingers of the people of South Africa. It will take place in South Africa. It will be a resounding success.

The Hon the Rev K.R.J. Meshoe was very correct when he described President Sepp Blatter as a friend, admirer and supporter of South Africa. In this context, I must repeat that we have been reluctant to ask ourselves the critically important question about what has happened to the South African mind during these 13 years of freedom. This is perhaps because we know that an honest answer to this question might shatter the beautiful image of a rainbow nation, which, I have no doubt we must continue to propagate.

But having avoided what we should have done, and should still do, it will be difficult to answer the question - if President Sepp Blatter is a friend, admirer and supporter of South Africa, as the Hon the Rev K.R.J. Meshoe said, what then is the tribune of the people of South Africa who sits in this House of representatives, the Hon the Rev K.R.J. Meshoe!

When President Sepp Blatter stood at the FIFA podium in Zurich, Switzerland and slowly pulled out the card that read "South Africa", the people of our country, of all races, our continent, the African Diaspora, the friends of Africa throughout the world, as far as New Zealand, took to the streets in a spontaneous display of joy.

For measly partisan reasons, the Hon the Rev K.R.J. Meshoe now believes, quite wrongly, that he can convince FIFA and the football world that these millions in our country, in Africa, the African Diaspora and the rest of the world did not mean it when they confirmed through their celebrations, that they are determined to ensure that the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup will be the best ever!

I believe that whatever our problems, our nation indeed shares the common resolve to make the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup the best ever. I believe that this common resolve communicates the unequivocal message that regardless of our fractured past, and despite the reality of the stubborn persistence of the legacy of that past, we are indeed capable of arriving at a national consensus about how to respond to our most important challenges, about what we need to do to identify and act in unity to advance that which we will have agreed constitutes the national interest.

Perhaps we should together take a deliberate decision to institute a national process that will help us to identify the issues that we would determine as the matters on which we should act in partnership, inspired by a common patriotism that would enable us to build the cross-party partnership that would be united by a voluntary national consensus.

Consistent with this reflection, the Hon Bantu Holomisa said, "Perhaps it might not be a bad idea to form a steering committee composed of all South African stakeholders to begin to identify areas where we need to deepen the debate as a nation. Such a process should culminate in a National Convention where resolutions would be taken...This is the type of action that I believe is required; we cannot simply talk of unity and deeper debates if it doesn't result in something concrete."

Parliament will, in its wisdom, decide what to do with this suggestion. If Parliament, which represents the will of the people, constituted such a steering committee from within its ranks, and it asked me to suggest three domestic topics that might be addressed, I would suggest that these should be:

- social transformation, including the important issues of national and social cohesion, and a national value system;
- the eradication of poverty; and,
- the reduction and eradication of crime, especially crimes against the person.

I would add this note of caution, that the participants in the process that the Hon Bantu Holomisa proposed should not set themselves short timeframes. I would say that they would have to learn to be patient. I would say that they should respect what the Hon Pieter Mulder said, that we do not know one another.

I would advise that there would be no difficulty whatsoever in getting everybody to agree that there must be social transformation; poverty must be eradicated; and crime must be defeated, totally and permanently.

Similarly I would advise that the steering committee should expect that the seeming unanimity about these outcomes would, certainly in the first instance and whatever else would happen later, dissolve into

a fractious wrangle even about the definition of the issues about which there was apparent unanimity, to say nothing about what would have to be done practically to respond to these challenges.

But I would also advise the steering committee to pay the closest attention to what the people say, regardless of what many of us in this House think about our country and government, and indeed about ourselves as the people's oracle. I say this to recall what various Hon Members, who actually work among the people, said about what the people say about where they have been, where they are, and where they know they will be.

I refer here to testimonies given by such Hon Members as the Hon Elizabeth Thabethe, J.B. Sibanyoni, Sindi Chikunga, Maggie Sotyu, Richard Baloyi, Spetho Asiya, and Nomhle Dambuza. These and other testimonies brought the voice of the ordinary people into this House, the masses who know what pain and suffering means, who know what subjection to merciless and brutal physical, psychological, economic and cultural violence means, who know what sacrifice means, who know what a word of honour and a solemn commitment means, who understand what the Hon Pandelani Nefolovhodwe meant when he spoke of "factors that the poor are subjected to, (which) contribute to the dehumanisation of people, and lead to feelings of inferiority and hopelessness", who agree with the Hon Themba Godi that "the freedom we have attained should address itself to these two: poverty and inequality that afflict the majority", who will have known that the Hon Obed Bapela told them of the future of which they are certain, when he used the idiom - "Mma o tlile; tlala o nyele."

These words convey the feeling of happiness that all of us must surely feel at the success of the Proteas against Pakistan. It bodes very well indeed that we won both the Test and the ODI series, and triumphed in such a spectacular fashion in the 20/20 match. We wish the Proteas success in the Cricket World Cup in the Caribbean, confident that they have now fully mastered the mathematics of the Duckworth-Lewis method.

We also welcome to our country the new coach of Bafana Bafana, Carlos Parreira, and wish him success in his important work. We are glad that he is now, legally, a member of our national cadre of professional workers.

Our hearts are full of joyful song as we join the Soweto Gospel Choir in celebration of the Grammy Award they have just won, which confirms a distinguishing feature of our nation, that we are indeed a people that carries in its blood a joyful culture of hope.

Later this year, we will celebrate the 10th anniversary of the formation of the National Council of Provinces. This will give us an opportunity to assess how well the institutions of our democratic are functioning. In the meantime, I would like to take this opportunity to salute the National Assembly and all of you, Hon Members, for your devotion to the task to serve the masses of the people who elected all of us.

I am aware of the frustrations about the Executive that you have sometimes felt. I would like to assure you that our Deputy President, as Leader of Government Business, is working hard to address your concerns in this regard.

"By this means, we recognised the fact that there can be such a thing as a national consensus around a national agenda. We accept that the advancement of the very interests of each, regardless of their race, colour, gender or social class, demanded that we bend every effort to ensure that the kind of society described in the constitution is born.

"Together, we adopted a position which recognised that no legitimate sectional interest can be served or aspiration realised, unless it was pursued within a society characterised by equality, non-racialism, non-sexism and human dignity.

"We are convinced that precisely because we were and are engaged in a complex and all-embracing process of fundamental social transformation, proceeding as we are from our past of division, conflict and mutual antagonism, it was and is important that we develop a national consensus about those matters, such as those reflected in our Constitution, which will define the fundamental and permanent nature of our society."

On all occasions when we meet as we have since last Friday, we speak of change - some about our success in changing our society for the better, and others about how we have failed to effect any significant change, each speaking from his or her opposing trench, such that in the end we appear to be speaking about different countries, one of which might be called South Africa, and the other, to give it a name, whatever its meaning, might be called Azania.

When we talk about change we speak, as we must do, about the number of jobs created, about the number of houses built, about the provision of water, sanitation and electricity and about rates of economic growth.

But we rarely speak about the change or the absence of change in our minds. Each time anybody dares to venture into this area, in many instances to decode a vocabulary that has learnt to disguise old insults by presenting itself as the vehicle for the dispassionate presentation of objective reality, a deluge of condemnation descends on the daring soul, communicating the message to all who would dare that these should forever be mindful of the advice - only fools rush in where angels fear to tread!

If I may, I would like to suggest that the fact that it was necessary, today, to repeat verbatim what was said 10 years ago, makes an immensely sad statement about us all. It must surely be a matter of profound distress that almost at the end of the 13th year of our emancipation, questions must still be asked as to whether we are, as a nation, capable of uniting to pursue a commonly defined national agenda, as to whether it is to expect too much to believe that as individual members of our society, we are capable of honestly asking ourselves the questions - what more can we do, what can we contribute?

After the Hon Minister of Arts and Culture had spoken, saying that "Thomas Paine once wrote that we esteem too lightly that which we gain rather cheaply", I wondered whether toxic words had not been lightly spoken in this House because there are some among us whose hearts had absolutely no possibility to be moved when the Hon Minister spoke of "The tears, the blood and the very lives of the martyrs...", and the Hon Diale commanded us to remember what Oliver Tambo had said 40 years ago, when he paid tribute to the South African and Zimbabwe heroes who fell in Hwange to secure our liberty, that "those illustrious combatants...fell on the sacred fields of Zimbabwe with the warrior cry on their lips - victory or death!"

Equally, I am aware of the legitimate sentiment shared within the judiciary that you must pay closer attention to the quality of the drafts of the legislation which only you can approve. I accept that if there are any weaknesses in this regard, the Executive must also bear its own share of responsibility.

I know that on occasion we have made honest mistakes, both as an institution and as Members. I know too that some have sought to exploit these failings to communicate a message about the Honourable Members that is patently unjust.

As I have interacted with the people, I have not heard any conclusion made that the people view this House as being little more than a den of thieves. Nevertheless, I am certain that all of you are as aware as anybody else in our country that you must do everything possible and necessary to maintain the integrity and dignity of this premier expression of the will of the people.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Hon Tony Leon for taking the trouble to inform me about his impending retirement as leader of the Democratic Alliance before he made this public. I am certain that all of us will miss his lively engagement as a party leader in the public debate that must and will

continue, whatever our views about the rights and wrongs of the arguments he advanced, and the manner in which he advanced those arguments.

From where I sit, I would never have the courage to argue that he served merely as a Chihuahua, because, indeed, he has the bark of a bull terrier. I wish the DA success as it engages the process to elect a successor, whom I am certain, will be no less a defender of the mandate of the DA and its supporters than is the Hon Tony Leon. I am certain that whatever else he does having voluntarily surrendered the leadership of the DA, he will succeed. Should he need a helping hand, which I doubt, we are nevertheless ready to lend that hand. Tony, best wishes!

As I approach the conclusion of my response to the lively and important Debate on the State of the Nation Address, let me return to the issue of crime which a significant number of Honourable Members discussed.

The Hon Molefi Sefularo said the Hon the Rev K.R.J. Meshoe "chose to take upon himself the task of amplifying the voices that insist that the President, the government and the ANC do not care about the tragedy and the pain of those who fall victim to crime. Like the Pharisees, he wants the President to wear sack cloth and flagellate himself."

I too have heard reports of the voices to which the Hon Sefularo referred. This I must say - for 64 years I have never had either the ability or the courage or the need to resort to grand theatrical gestures. I know this as a matter of fact that the overwhelming majority of the masses of our people would be gravely offended if tomorrow, to respond to the demands of the Pharisees, I should take to the stage to weep tears meant for the camera, to convince them of what they know, that the African National Congress of which I am a proud member, now, for the first time in 95 years, has at last understood their pain, and is at one with them in lamenting their individual tragedies.

There will be no empty theatrical gestures, no prancing on the stage and no flagellation, but we will continue to act against crime, as decisively as we have sought to do throughout the years of our liberation. From us, from the government, will issue no words that are lightly spoken.

For the Fiscal Year 1994/1995, the Police budget was R7,7 billion. Five years later, for the Fiscal Year 1999/2000, the Police budget had doubled to R14,6 billion. Five years after this, for the Fiscal Year 2004/2005, the Police Budget had increased to R25,4 billion. Two years later, for the Fiscal Year 2006/2007, the Police Budget had increased yet again to R32,5 billion, an increase of R7 billion in a mere two years, equal, in nominal terms, to the entire budget for 1994/1995. The Medium Term Expenditure Framework visualises that the Police Budget for 2009/2010 will be R43, 6 billion, more than 600% of what it was when we achieved our freedom.

The number of members of the Police Service increased from the low figure of 116, 774 in the year 2001/2002, which reflected the adjustment that had taken place during the difficult phase of creating the new SAPS, to 139,000 two years later in the year 2003/2004. Two years later, in 2005/2006, the number increased to 155, 500. In terms of our MTEF planning, three years after this, as I indicated broadly last Friday, for the year 2008/2009, the number will be 183,000. What this means is that in 7 years, we will have increased the size of the Police Service by at least 67,000 officers, significantly more than 50% of its size in 2001/2002.

These figures tell a simple story about the resources that our government has, through the years of freedom, allocated to the struggle for the safety and security of all our people, precisely because the achievement of this objective has always been one of the principal and therefore priority strategic objectives of the democratic revolution. About this, we will not apologise to anybody.

During the course of the Debate, the Hon Minister of Safety and Security reminded the House and the nation of an analysis published in the 2005/2006 SAPS annual report, which reflected on the crimes of

murder, attempted murder, rape, serious and violent assault, and common assault, precisely the crimes that produce the greatest levels of insecurity among our people.

The Hon Minister reported that: "What the exercise revealed was that 81,5% of the murder victims were killed by persons they knew. The killers in 61,9% of the cases were relatives, friends or acquaintances of the victims. In 75,9% of rape cases the victims knew the rapists, while in 56,9% the rapists were relatives, friends or acquaintances of the victims. Cases of assault showed higher percentages of perpetrators known to the victims, including relatives, friends or acquaintances."

These figures tell the very obvious story that by far the bulk of violence against the person in our society occurs in specific social circumstances, within communities that are poor, marginalised and afflicted by an almost irreversible sense of hopelessness. With regard to murder and rape, 20% of these would then occur throughout society as a whole, outside the relatively narrow circle of relatives, friends or acquaintances, or people known to the victims.

With regard to all this, the Hon Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi made the entirely correct observation that, "Today the largest number of victims of crime are among the poor, including the older people attacked in townships by youngsters who pillage their wages at the end of a hard week's work, or the small emerging businesses trading in rural and growing urban areas alike."

Further, the Hon Dr Buthelezi made a call to which all of us must surely respond, that, "At a deeper level, we need to go back to basics and inculcate a respect agenda amongst our youth. A transforming society, such as ours, need not be an uncivilised society. The seeds of crime and lawlessness are often sown at a young age. We must bring back a sense of respect in our schools, communities, townships and cities."

To this I would add that we must welcome and respond with great vigour to what the Hon Minister of Social Development said, that "Strengthening families is fundamental in the quest for social cohesion and building the social fabric of our society. We intend to release for public discussion later this year, a National Family Policy. We hope it will stimulate dialogue on our common vision of the family as a core institution in our country, and the rock upon which our communities are founded."

In the State of the Nation Address, I said we would "improve our analysis of crime trends to improve our performance with regard both to crime prevention and crime combating. In this regard, we must respond to the cold reality that, as in other countries, the overwhelming majority of violent crimes against the person occur in the most socio-economically deprived areas of our country and require strong and sustained community interventions focused on crime prevention."

I stand by these conclusions and reaffirm that the government will do everything possible to act on what we have promised. I am indeed very pleased that when it celebrated its 95th anniversary, the ANC committed itself once more to mobilise the masses of our people to join the partnership against crime, in the same way that they acted in unity to defeat the apartheid crime against humanity.

Honourable Members;

In the end what we are about is a revolutionary act of the creation of a new society. None of us has any prior experience of this process. Those of us who have no choice or have chosen to be agents of change will indeed at all times ask ourselves - what more can we do, what can we contribute?

We know that those who contributed nothing or very little to the struggle to end the very long years of oppression, those who were too scared to face the consequences of being new Voortrekkers, or have become, as the Hon Minister of Defence said, "eloquent spectators speaking from the exaggerated comfort of European cities", will stride down the sidewalk as we march along the long and difficult highway to the better life to which we are committed, forever mocking, forever throwing our inevitable temporary failures at our faces, forever triumphant when we falter, forever finding fault even with the way

we walk, always predicting that nothing but despair will be our reward whenever we come to the end of our long journey to that new South Africa that will be free of everything that is ugly and repulsive in human society.

These are the people, compatriots and residents of the common geopolitical space and their kindred spirits elsewhere in the world, who will, as some did in this House this week, utter words that are lightly spoken.

The poem, The Rose Tree, continued:

'It needs to be but watered,'

James Connolly replied,

'To make the green come out again

And spread on every side,

And shake the blossom from the bud

To be the garden's pride.'

'But where can we draw water,'

Said Pearse to Connolly,

'When all the wells are parched away?

O plain as plain can be

There's nothing but our own red blood

Can make a right Rose Tree.'

Fortunately, there will be no need for us to give of our own red blood to make a right Rose Tree. As long as we embed in our deepest consciousness what the Hon MaNjobe said, our water wells will not be parched away.

She said that "As South Africans we must reclaim ubuntu, put emphasis on mutual understanding, appreciate differences, and tolerate diversity in the multi-cultural environment we live in. The ubuntu values we promote must sufficiently meet the challenges of reconciliation, reconstruction and development."

As the Hon Lechesa Tsenoli said, so noble is the project to create a new South Africa that it cannot but be the product of a lifetime of selfless endeavour. He said that this reality compels and entitles us together to say - siz' olibamba lingatshoni!

Thank you.