

**ADDRESS BY THE ANC SEDIBENG CHAIRPERSON AND THE EXECUTIVE  
MAYOR OF THE SEDIBENG DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY CLLR. MAHOLE SIMON  
MOFOKENG DURING THE FUNERAL SERVICE OF COMRADE DUMA PLAATJIE,  
BOPHELONG HALL**

**19 JULY 2014**

Comrade Program Director; The Executive Mayor of ELM Comrade Greta Hlongwane;

Speakers, Chief Whips, MMCs and Councilors;

Leaders of the Alliance present here today;

The bereaved family, the Plaatjie family;

The people of Sedibeng, Emfuleni and Bophelong in particular;

I greet you all in the year of '**Unity In Action to Move South Africa Forward**' as declared by the Movement of the people of our country, the African National Congress.

The Movement that comrade Duma Plaatjie was a member and the leader at various levels during his times of activism.

Comrade Duma's funeral takes place a day after the celebration and the recognition of the birthday of one of our own, the world's acclaimed icon Tata Madiba. His birthday was declared Mandela International Day by the United Nations in recognition of the human achievement in humility, dedication and selfless service to the people for peace, reconciliation and freedom championed by Tata Mandela himself.

Whilst the Christians Celebrate the birth of their Savior Jesus Christ on the 25th December every year and other religions celebrating the birth of their own Saviors on different dates, this son of the soil, the Icon of the world, Nelson Mandela in the history of mankind is by now the only Savior whose birthday, the Mandela International Day is celebrated and recognized by all the people of the world irrespective of their religions.

This is the greatest achievement for the people of our Continent, our country and the Africans in particular as South Africans, we are the continent that was regarded as the most backward by the developed world particularly the Europeans and Americans.

If I had powers to instruct those who enter extraordinary events into the Guinness's Book of World Records, I was going to instruct them to enter this Day, the 18th July, the International Mandela Day as the only birth date of an Icon that is recognized and celebrated by all in the world.

In our region this time around the Mandela International Day was celebrated through Career Exhibition hosted by the Department of Higher Education as the main activity amongst others. There are two most important pronouncements made at that event yesterday.

The first one is where the VC of the VUT Ms Mutlwane committed to offer free bursaries to the three top learners for the 2014 Matric class. The second one is where the Minister of Higher Education Comrade Blade Nzimande committed to offer free

university bursaries to the top 50 students and the free FET / TVEC bursaries to the next 50 top learners in our region.

This is an opportunity that this government is making available to our children. As Tata Mandela once said that '**Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.**'

This year marks the 30th Anniversary of the Vaal Uprising and the African National Congress and the Alliance working with the ANC-led government at various levels has developed a detailed Business Plan towards the celebration and commemoration where the main event will be on the 3rd September 2014.

Whilst on this point let me say that it was in this very same Hall where the community meeting was held on the 27th August 1984 when the lights went off and the police started shooting and killing the young man Phalane as the first victim of what was to follow on Monday the 3rd September 1984.

To the Plaatjie family and the community of Bophelong, let me say that we are saddened to hear of your sudden loss. Our hearts are with you in this time of sorrow. Please accept our heartfelt condolences on the loss of your loved one. Words cannot express how saddened we are to hear of your loss. Please know that our thoughts and prayers are with you during this tragic time.

At the same time let me thank all our people for showing their confidence to their movement, the African National Congress, by returning it back into Parliament as the majority party that don't seek to form coalition with any party to take decisions.

You have given us a full mandate to govern the country including the Gauteng Province which the DA spent over R100m thinking they will take it from your movement, the African National Congress.

Our President Honorable Jacob Zuma committed that there will be radical transformation of the economy to address the plight of our people and further that he is not going to allow any laziness, the spirit that our Premier in Gauteng comrade David Makhura is upholding to the highest degree.

We have made plans and we are going to run our government the way we campaigned. Our Premier, comrade David Makhura has already made unannounced visits to various service delivery points like the hospitals and clinics to ensure that our people are receiving the services they deserve and are treated with dignity. This time around we must work like an activist government. No laziness will be allowed either from the politicians or officials.

One of the issues that our people raised during the election campaign is the level of unemployment. We may have built roads and the RDP houses but you our people, you are concerned about the unemployment and the corruption by some politicians and some officials in the government, whether perceived or real. As we have committed in

our manifesto that we will do everything in our power to deal with corruption and no one shall intimidate us to do so, we shall act come rain come hail.

In this period is not going to be business as usual, all of us must work very hard and serve our people with dignity they deserve – that's why comrades we must deal harshly with any form of corruption where it raises its ugly head.

**Programme Director**, coming back to what we are all here for. Let me say that I was honored and blessed to serve under the leadership of comrade Plaatjie at various levels that I already mentioned but the most interesting one was when I was serving under his leadership as the Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the then Western Vaal Metropolitan Sub-Structure.

The last time I was with comrade Plaatjie was on the 28th May 2014 during our Mayoral Awards after our SODA where we were recognizing the role and contribution made by our predecessors to put us where we are today.

To me comrade Duma Plaatjie was a man with humility, commitment, softhearted man, an academic and highly knowledgeable man who never boasted about it; friendly and easy to handle but yet results orientated person.

There are two projects or instances that I would like to mention here and are not meant to offend anyone but they are factual. The first one was when there was competition between the Vereeniging-Kopanong and the Western Vaal Metropolitan Sub-Structures and other municipalities in the North Free State and the Western and Northern Gauteng as to which area should be accorded the CASINO license.

I'm sure you can guess what happened. The Western Vaal Metropolitan Sub-Structure under the leadership of Duma Plaatjie as the Chairperson of EXCO and Rollaway Mthimkhulu as the Mayor got rights of license to have the Casino hence the Emerald Casino and Resort that we see today.

This was a foundation for what was called Emfuleni Water Front Development Master Plan, under the leadership of the late Executive Mayor Thabane, later to be called the Vaal 21 by the former Executive Mayor Mlungisi Hlongwane and now called the River City by the current leadership.

The second instance or project was when the RDP housing Program was to be implemented for the first time in Gauteng Province all the majority of the municipalities in the province submitted their bids to the Provincial government. You may also guess what happened during the process?

The Western Vaal Metropolitan Local Municipality won the bid with the building of 10 000 houses in Bophelong. I challenge the people of Bophelong Extension known as Muvhango and the authorities that the Honor you can give to this man lying here is to name the Bophelong Extension or Muvhango as it is called, after him. Why can't we call it Duma Plaatjie?

I was a member of comrade Duma's Executive Committee responsible for Finance, Tendering Process and the Service Delivery and for all those responsibilities he gave me a full support and allowed me to be innovative as much as I could but yet not getting his eyes off the ball.

Comrade Duma will always be remembered as a great team player – verified by his many achievements during his tenure as the head of the former Western Vaal Metropolitan Local Municipality.

To Duma's wife and children let me say that as the days and weeks pass, and as you return to life's routine, may you continue to feel comforted by the love and support of family and friends. May your hearts soon be filled with wonderful memories of joyful times together as you celebrate a life well lived.

As I conclude let me make the following poems dedicated to comrade Duma:

**You Were Just Like A Candle**

**Full Of Light And Comradeship**

**Now You Have Returned To The Source Of Life**

**In Faith And Gratitude Watching Over Us**

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**Farewell Colleague**

**We Will Miss You Very Much**

**But As Our Dear Friend**

**You Will Live Further In Our Hearts**

**As A Fountain Of Friendship**

**May His Soul Rest In Peace**