

YOUTH DAY COMMEMORATION SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE HONOURABLE MAYOR COUNCILLOR SK MNUKWA ON THE 25th OF JUNE 2021 IN EMAXESIBENI TOWN HALL.

Madam Speaker,

Chief Whip

Fellow Honourable Councillors

Traditional Leaders present today,

Municipal Manager and Senior Managers

Young Entrepreneurs and Local SMMEs

Media Houses present

Ladies and Gentlemen

Ndiyanibulisa ngegama le ntuthukho kunye negama leNkosi yethu uYesu Krestu, Amen.

This year marks the 45th anniversary of the 16 June 1976 student uprising in Soweto when young people protested against the imposition of Afrikaans by the apartheid regime as a medium of instruction.

They were rebelling against Bantu Education, which, despite its name, was no education at all. It was another tool of the apartheid system to keep black South Africans in servitude.

The uprising ended tragically with hundreds of young people being brutally killed. Following the advent of democracy in 1994, the new democratic government declared 16 June as National Youth Day and June as the Youth Month.

The declaration honours the contribution of the youth in the struggle for the liberation of South Africa. This year, National Youth Day and Youth Month is

commemorated under the theme: **“The Year of Charlotte Manny Maxeke: Growing youth employment for an inclusive and transformed society.”**

In unlocking the potential of our youth, we can build an inclusive economy, create employment and transform our society. However allow me to reiterate sentiments that our youth are responsible for their own advancements and must take their destiny into their own hands.

Let the youth rise to the challenge of leading our post COVID-19 recovery and embrace opportunities created by the “new normal”. These opportunities coincide with mediums of the 4th Industrial Revolution and as such they cut across all sectors of our economy.

Today we’re here to support our young entrepreneurs and local SMMEs in our Municipality. We are here to ensure that they too shall participate in the national economic recovery programme so as to alleviate challenges of poverty and unemployment.

The two beneficiaries here today are known as; Chicken Dust Youth Project from ward 07 at EmaXesibeni and Dombela Youth Project from Ward 22 in KwaBhaca.

These are youth-led community projects within Umzimvubu that have collectively benefitted more than 10 young people in the area. The Municipality yearns to see this figure grow exponentially over the next few years.

During our ‘shortfall’ assessment evaluation of these two projects in consultation with the respective SMMEs, we were advised that a heat presser machine for both projects would be a great intervention from government. In so doing, we also procured two outdoor commercial umbrellas and two outdoor trading counters (tables).

This we did to create a flexible and an enabling environment to trade. Our role as Umzimvubu local Municipality is to create a platform where businesses can trade and engage on matters pertaining the local economy. This ambition represents the scale and impact that we can achieve through effective public/private partnerships.

In the State of the Nation Address earlier this year, the President of the Republic of South Africa, Hon. Cyril Ramaphosa, reported that the Department of Small Business Development and the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) had achieved their target of supporting 1,000 youth-owned enterprises in 100 days, particularly in the township and rural economy.

This we realised through a young entrepreneur based at EmaXesibeni who goes by the name Somikazi Zulu from Lulo Pastry. The small pastry business received R100 000 from the Office of the Premier as part of the provincial small business development programme last year.

As this Municipality, we yearn to see more entrepreneurs making strides in the provincial space. The challenge of youth unemployment can seem insurmountable. However, we know what we need to do to address it.

We know that by providing young people with opportunities for work experience, by supporting them to start and grow their own businesses, by fixing our skills development system and by creating opportunities for work that serves the common good, we can make inroads into this challenge.

However we need you to rise, and demonstrate that a better life for all is indeed within our reach. I call on you (young people) to put your innovation, creativity and energy at the disposal of our Municipality.

Just as the generation of 1976 did, I call on you to take responsibility for your future. This requires focus, patriotism, commitment and consistency. In a word, it requires hard work.

With the rapid rise in new infections, the country has now been placed on coronavirus alert level 3. We call on you to continue to comply with the public health regulations that are in place for everyone's safety. Continue to wear your mask in public at all times, continue to sanitise or wash your hands regularly, and practice social distancing.

Avoid crowded spaces, insurmountable parties and social gatherings. Encourage your friends and families to do the same. I call on you (young people) to be the driving forces of change in your communities.

Let's work together in combating the social ills like gender-based violence, gangsterism and substance abuse that are ravaging our people, just as the youth of 1976 worked hard for the demise of apartheid.

Armed with the tools of recovery, infused with the spirit of selflessness and service, our collective resolve strengthened, we can transform this country. You are all welcomed in this remarkable event.

I THANK YOU!!!!