

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS, MR NTOPILE KGANYAGO, MP GIVES AN ADDRESS ON THE OCCASION TO MARK THE (NATIONAL) LIBERATION DAY OF THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA

VENUE: Burgers Park Hotel, Tshwane, Gauteng

DATE: 04 JULY 2007

- Your Excellency, Ambassador Designate Munyakyanza
- Excellencies and colleagues
- Distinguished Guests
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Mwuriwe! (Kinyarwanda for Good evening)

It is a great honour to represent the Government of the Republic of South Africa on this auspicious occasion. We wish to convey to you, Your Excellency, the Government and the people of the Republic of Rwanda our congratulations on the celebration of your National Day also known as Liberation Day.

May I also take this opportunity to warmly welcome Ambassador Designate HE Mr. Eugene Munyakyanza and Madame Munyakyanza to the Republic of South Africa. Your Excellency, I would like to wish you a very happy and fruitful stay in our country and rest assured that the Government and the people of the Republic of South Africa

are confident, Your Excellency, that you will continue the good work of your predecessor in facilitating and consolidating the cordial relations that exist between our two countries.

Excellencies, Liberation Day symbolises Rwanda's break from its difficult past in exchange for a trajectory geared towards national reconciliation and development that has inspired so many on the African continent in particular and the international community in general . It is in this spirit that HE President Thabo Mbeki said during his visit to Kigali in April 2004 to remember the 10th Anniversary of the Commencement of the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda, and I quote "We salute you our Rwandan brothers and sisters, and pledge our friendship with you, a friendship that obliges us willingly and voluntarily to stand side by side with you as you work to rebuild your country and your lives" (unquote). This commitment to a friendship that President Mbeki spoke about, is founded among others on the bilateral relations we have been cultivating between the two countries notably the signing of the General Agreement on Bilateral Cooperation in 2001 thus making *inter alia*, provision for the establishment of a Joint Commission of Cooperation (JCC) which became the official forum for interaction between our two countries.

Since the first session of the JCC in Pretoria on 22 June 2001, significant progress has been recorded by the various Working Groups to develop and implement cooperation projects and programmes.

During the 4th Session of the South Africa/Rwanda JCC that was held in Kigali in August (2006) last year, represented by both the South African Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr.

Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma and the Rwandan Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Dr. Charles Murigande, our countries reiterated the general cooperation within the JCC that centres on human resource development and institutional capacity building. Further to this, the two Ministers acknowledged that the JCC has served as a framework for the strategic partnership between South Africa and Rwanda promoting the objectives of the African Union and the consolidation of the African Agenda. This partnership is underscored by high-level engagement between the South African and Rwandan public sector stakeholders in promoting the common interests of our two countries.

South Africa and the continent, as well as the international community continue to be inspired by the remarkable progress that Rwanda has made in the face of great adversity. We are equally encouraged by Rwanda's commitment to gender equality, a phenomenon that has set an example for other countries within the continent and the world at large to emulate.

Through the tireless efforts of our leaders, our continent is now firmly entrenched in the global agenda and we are ready to stand up and be counted. We have a challenge, firstly to inspire our people on the continent to understand what it is to be African – that to be African calls on all of us to understand the history of the continent, to identify with its present challenges and most importantly, to offer ourselves to be part of the solutions to its future. Secondly, as we strive towards the renewal of our continent and making this a truly African century, we are presented with an unprecedented opportunity to contribute towards a change in global thinking about our people and our continent. We have

a lot indeed to share and contribute as well as many good stories to tell.

Excellencies, the Government of the Republic of South Africa also wishes to congratulate the Government of the Republic of Rwanda for its accession to the East African Community (EAC). The accession of Rwanda to the EAC will certainly spur the East African region towards a path to greater economic development and prosperity!

It is in this spirit that I have the honour to propose on behalf of the Republic of South Africa, a toast to the well-being of His Excellency, The President of the Republic of Rwanda, His Excellency President Paul Kagame and the people of Rwanda.

Mugire Amahoro! (Kinyarwanda for Peace be upon you)