

**ADDRESS ON BEHALF OF THE PREMIER OF THE PROVINCE
OF KWAZULU-NATAL ON THE OCCASION OF THE RECEPTION
DINNER AHEAD OF THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF CATOR
MANOR MUSEUM**

26 May 2017

Programme Director

Bayede, Hlanga Lomhlabathi!

Mayor of Ethekwini Municipality Cllr Zandile Gumede;

Prince of KwaPhindangene Dr MG Buthelezi;

Members of the Provincial Legislature;

Members of the Royal Family;

Mayors and Councilors;

Amakhosi Present;

Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen

First and foremost, I would like to extend an apology on behalf of the Premier Willies Mchunu. He was looking forward to this reception dinner but he asked me few minutes ago to stand in for him as he is not feeling well.

It is an honour and a privilege to deliver this short message on this very important evening.

This event coincides with Africa Day celebration which started yesterday. During this term of office we are encouraging communities to celebrate together national days and other cultural events.

Together we must celebrate the Battle of Isandlwana, Rosh Hashan, Diwali, Umthayi, Umkhosi Wokweshwama, Day of Reconciliation and Eid which starts tomorrow. We are convinced that this approach will ensure social cohesion.

These national days make us a unique nation which cannot be found in other parts of the globe. As government, we are determined to preserve the wonderful tapestry of cultures and traditions for future generations.

Importantly, we thank His Majesty, Isilo Samabandla for being our father who is always available to guide us. Our King is not only the direct heir and descendant of all the Zulu Kings but is also the symbol of peace and unity of our people.

His majesty has been champion for peace, development, fight against poverty, promoting good human values and self-reliance.

This weekend, this province and the country as a whole will witness His Majesty leading important events in our history.

Programme Director, perhaps it is very important to remind each other of where we are coming from. On the 20th September 2012, the people of KwaZulu-Natal, the Republic of South Africa and the entire globe witnessed the fulfillment of a long-held dream by His Majesty, King Goodwill ka Bhekuzulu, to witness a dignified reburial of the remains of his late mother, Queen Thomozile Jezangani KaNdwandwe Zulu.

As government, we are proud to have been involved in the whole process of searching for, and recovering, the remains of the late Queen at the behest of the King.

Not knowing where His Majesty's late mother's remains laid buried was a traumatic experience for the King, and that her recovery brought closure to him and the Royal family.

During the reburial on the 20th September 2012, the provincial government led by the former Premier Dr Zweli Mkhize emphasized the importance of closure, the kind of closure that was brought about for the King at the discovery of the Queen Mother's place of burial.

All members of the executive council shared with His Majesty the King, the divine truth that without closure there cannot be healing. The discovery, reburial and knowledge of the final resting place of

His Majesty's mother brought closure and healing to him and the Royal Household.

Importantly, the official opening of the Cator Manor Museum this weekend where Queen Mother is resting is historic and significant to the whole country.

We are eternally grateful to eThekweni Municipality under the leadership of the Mayor Cllr Zandile Gumede for the co-ordination of these important events this weekend

Critically, we are immeasurably grateful that His Majesty, iSilo SamaBandla can now go to the grave of the Queen Mother and talk to her if and when the need arises. Importantly, members of the royal family have an option of going to ritually take her spirit away to the Royal Palace and conduct any other traditional or religious rituals that they may deem fit.

The laying of the remains of the Queen Mother in Cato Manor heralded the joining of her spirit with other venerable members of this nation.

Like the statues that venerate past heroes and heroines, her final place of rest should be seen in a similar light. It represents a memorial which has brought about a cathartic closure, not only the

King and Royal Household, but to a whole nation which places great value on its culture and heritage.

As a nation we still display a lack of a sense of proper veneration of our proud past. This indicates a defeated mindset which has yet to emancipate itself from mental slavery, as the saying goes.

The proliferation of statues of colonial masters who did nothing but bring misery and grief to the indigenous people of this land is a glaring indictment regarding our outlook towards our heritage.

We want to say this evening that as government and subjects of His Majesty, we do sincerely hope that this museum will serve a fountain of wisdom and a source of inspiration to the entire nation.

Programme Director, in the spirit of Africa Day I believe that we need to engage in introspection and actively interrogate whether we have done enough, if anything, to highlight the rich heritage that lies uncovered in our midst.

Questions should be asked what cultural and heritage gems we are going to bequeath to our future generations. It has been said that a nation without culture and heritage is a dead nation.

Are we indeed a dead nation?

The answer is a resounding no! As His Majesty the King, iSilo SamaBandla has demonstrated, we can rise up from our comfort zones and revive our cultural sprit, rediscover our rich heritage in order to inculcate a sense of pride. This will motivate our future generations to rise beyond the shackles of self-doubt.

Programme Director, as we continue with Africa Day celebrations we take this opportunity to salute the great sons and daughters of our province, who over the history of colonial and apartheid oppression and repression stood firm in their resistance to all forms of inhumanity inflicted upon people of colour in our country.

We remember the frontier wars of the Eastern Cape where the Xhosa nation was involved in defending their land and livestock against colonialist encroachment.

So were the Anglo-Zulu wars such as the battle of Isandlwana and the eventual defeat of ISilo uCetshwayo in the battle of Ulundi on the 4th of July 1879, marking the beginning of the dismantling of the might of the Zulu nation.

The wars of great African kings such Moshoeshoe and Sekhukhuni also fall under the struggle, as they were defending their heritage, rights, livestock and land. When the first Indian indentured labourers

landed in Durban harbour on 16 November 1860, they were to find an already entrenched colonial system that was bent on European supremacy.

By the time Mohandas K. Gandhi, a free man, arrived on 22 May 1893, the Natal colonialists were busy consolidating their economic and political hegemony and power through various laws that discriminated against the indigenous and, increasingly, the Asian immigrants, including Indians, Pakistanis and Chinese.

Few years ago, the provincial government launched Emakhosini Multi-media Centre located in Ulundi. The centre stand has a memorial constructed to preserve and restore the history for future generation. That is where there was clash of cultures and civilizations as the first group of Voortrekkers clashed with Zulu nation that had made this area their home and kingdom.

It is in the area where the Voortrekker leader Piet Retief and members of his commando lost their lives and triggered a series of events which included the rapture within the Zulu nation itself. The subsequent clashes and bloodshed resulted in the designation of 16 December as Dingaan se dag and subsequently the Day of the Covenant or Geloofte dag for the Afrikaner community.

This day has been renamed the Day for Reconciliation by the new democratic government. In reality this means that the tensions and conflict that we carried as South Africans carried over many decades was finally settled by the creation of a platform for all communities to accept each other as equals. This was done through the national general elections based on equality and the principle of one man one vote.

The solution to South Africa's conflict was achieved on the basis of accepting that "...South Africa belongs to all who live in it, Black and White..." Similarly, the future of our country will be secured by respecting the fundamentals that supported its formation.

The term Rainbow Nation describes us as a tapestry of intermingling cultures who form a colorful single inseparable entity. Cultural differences and our different heritages should not necessarily form a barrier between the different races of South Africa.

Instead, the rich cultural heritage that we all share across the cultural and racial divide should form the basis of a cohesive nation that realizes that as one nation, we stand a better chance of not only survival but prosperity in a rapidly changing global environment.

Our province is rich in heritage sites and entities that cross the cultural divide. We need to cherish and preserve these.

The message from the provincial government is that we need harness the cooperation of business in private-public partnerships for nation building and to enhance economic development, tourism and job creation in our province

Bayede, Hlanga LoMhlabathi!

I thank you.