

**WELCOMING SPEECH BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF STEVE TSHWETE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, CLLR MIKE MASINA AT THE WOMEN SUMMIT AT THE BANQUET HALL ON THE 15/08/2013**

**PROGRAMME DIRECTOR**

**DR DAVID & MAMIKIE MOLAPO  
HONOURABLE CHIEF WHIP, CLLR BUSI NDALA  
MEMBERS OF THE MAYORAL COMMITTEE & FELLOW COUNCILLORS  
ANC PROVINCIAL SECRETARY, CDE LUCKY NDINISA  
THE REGIONAL CHAIRPERSON OF ANCWL, CDE. NORAH MAHLANGU MABHENA  
WARD COMMITTEE MEMBERS & CDW'S  
THE MUNICIPAL MANAGER & THE DEPUTY MUNICIPAL MANAGER  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS, DIRECTORS, ASSISTANT DIRECTORS AND MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS  
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS  
FELLOW MUNICIPAL CITIZENS**

Sanibonani, Dumelang, Lotshani, Goeie More, Good Morning...

Warm greetings to all of you who have congregated here to commemorate and celebrate the great work of women and the numerous achievements accomplished this far, then and now is like two worlds apart. It is indeed a great honour to welcome all of you to Steve Tshwete Local Municipality motivated by our Vision "***To be the Best Leading Community Driven Municipality in the Provision of sustainable services & Developmental Programmes***".

I am very happy that we have gathered as we have done so as to pay tribute to the countless Heroines who have made it possible for us to enjoy our freedom today. All of us should use this month August, Women's Month to reflect on the challenges still facing all women in our communities and evaluate the progress we are in ensuring that South Africa becomes a truly non-sexist society, as aspired by the women of 1956, who marched against the oppressive apartheid laws and the sterling role women played in liberating our country and in shopping our Democracy.

The former President of SA Mr. Thabo Mbeki said in an occasion like this, quote "***We will therefore year after year, continue to pay tribute and salute all our unsung Heroines who led by example and left us a legacy of the true meaning of courage, sacrifice and determination in pursuit of the noble goal of equality, freedom and justice for all***".

I refer here to Heroines of our struggle such as Charlotte Maxeke, Ray Alexander, Ida Ntwana, Helen Joseph, Lilian Ngoyi, Lily Diedericks, Francis Baard, Rahima Moosa, Florence Matomela, Victoria Mxenge and many others who throughout the long years of struggle for freedom demonstrated fortitude in confronting white minority rule.

These women and many others who believed in the possibility of a South Africa based on non-racial, non-sexist, just and democratic ideals, freedom and equality; represent the very essence of being human.

The current President of the Country, the Honourable JG Zuma addressing at the occasion of National Women's Day Celebration, here in our Province Mpumalanga in Thulamahashe he said, I quote "***The year 2013 is special as we are marking 100 years of women's struggles for liberation from all forms of oppression in this country, under the theme; "A Centenary of Working Together towards Sustainable Women Empowerment and Gender Equality"***".

He further said, I quote "***Indeed women were not bystanders in the struggle to free this country; they were active participants throughout the years.***" & "***We acknowledge that we still have a lot of work to do to achieve full equality and also to improve the living conditions of women and the status of women in public and private sectors, but a firm foundation has been laid***".

We acknowledge the many challenges that women of today are still facing however, as we count our blessings lets acknowledge the huge impact that the women of South African are doing in the world as we congratulate the former Deputy President, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka whose appointment was recently announced by the UN Secretary General Mr. Bankhi Moon as the UN Under secretary for Women.

Dr. Nkosana Dlamini Zuma – Chairperson of the African Union Commission, former Deputy President Baleka Mbete serves as a Member of the African Union's African Peer Review Mechanism Panel.

The President acknowledged the following women and he said, I quote "***We are also proud of our Oscar- winning Hollywood actress Ms. Charlize Theron, who is also the UN Messenger for Peace. Ms. Theron has made herself available to her country to promote the fight against HIV and AIDS especially amongst the youth and young women.***"

***We also acknowledge the hard-working and respected musician Ms. Yvonne Chaka Chaka, who is the United Nations Children's Fund Goodwill Ambassador for Malaria in Africa and also the UN Millennium Development Goals Special Envoy for Africa***".

Programme Director counting the strides made in empowering women, I can go on and on there are countless achievements.

As I welcome our special guest Dr David Molapo allow me to quote him, I heard him preaching in TV program some years ago and he said "***A one circus elephant had its back leg chained so it could only make 3 steps, it got used to such conditions such that when the chains were removed it continued to make only 3 steps per direction***" so as women conditions have changed drastically from the conditions in 1956, they complaining about the few challenges the biggest challenge is to change our attitude and view, start to see ourselves as part of the solution to the current challenges than just helpless victims.

In her song titled "*All that you have is your soul*" from the album "*Crossroads*" Tracy Chapman, the internationally acclaimed guitarists highly rated alongside with Mark Knopfler of Dire Straits has this to say:

**All that you have is your soul**

*"Don't be tempted by the shiny apple  
Don't you eat of a bitter fruit  
Hunger only for a taste of justice  
Hunger only for a world of truth  
'Cause all that you have is your soul"*

In another song titled "*Born to Fight*" from the same album, she continues to say:

**Born to Fight**

*"They are stripping to take away my pride  
By stripping me of everything I own  
They are trying to hurt me inside  
And make me into a while man's drone  
But this one is not for sale  
And I was born to fight  
I aint been knocked down yet  
I was born to fight  
I'm the surest bet  
There aint no man no woman  
No beast alive that can beat me  
'Cause I'm born to fight"*

Dr. Molapo and your wife together with the entire team of Leaders present here today welcome to Steve Tshwete Municipality a constant recipient of Clean Audit Report from the Auditor General, a municipality that is committed to Clean Governance.

The Home of Talent:

Happy Jele (Orlando Pirates)

- Charles Phasha (Zone 14)
- Zinhle Mampa (Skeem Saka)
- Tsholofelo Maseko (Intersection)
- Lungile Lubambo ( 2021/13 Miss Mpumalanga
- DJ Mabhodo (Ligwalagwala FM), Count but a few.

Thank you for gracing our shores, we are confident you will call again.

***I THANK YOU!!! KE YALEBOGA!!! NGIYATHOKOZA!!! BAIE DANKIE!!!***