

STATEMENT BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM, Ms. MAKHOSAZANE MASILELA, MPL, DURING THE OCCASION OF THE AFRICA DAY DEBATE HELD AT THE MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

Friday, 30 May 2025

Honourable Speaker, Ms. Lindi Masina;
Honourable Deputy Speaker, Mr. Sam Masango;
Honourable Premier, Mr. Mandla Ndlovu;
Honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature;

Good morning!

1. Madam Speaker, today, I stand in firm support of celebrating **Africa Day** – not just as a commemorative event, but also as a powerful symbol of unity, resilience, and progress for the African Continent.
2. As South Africans, celebrating thirty one years of freedom and democracy, we remember and honour Pan-Africanist leaders such as Kwame Nkruma, Julius Nyerere, Jomo Kenyatta, Kenneth Kaunda, and many other African leaders who played an indelible role in building not only a proper Africa, but also contributing immensely to the liberation of South Africa.
3. Africa Day holds significant importance for the continent as it commemorates the founding of the **Organisation of African Unity (OAU) on 25 May 1963, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, which later became the African Union**. In their collective wisdom and foresight, our forebears who met in Addis Ababa in 1963 to form the OAU sought to foster unity and solidarity among African countries.

4. Therefore, it is important to ensure that African history becomes part of our syllabus at an early age, right through to the tertiary level, in order for our future generation to have full understating of our shared heritage and rich history. Accordingly, African history must be taught at our schools as a compulsory subject, so that we inculcate the spirit of Pan Africanism and unity.
 5. This day is far more than a historical footnote. It is a moment to reflect on how far the continent has come, and how much further it can go when united. Africa Day serves as a reminder of the continent's shared history and collective efforts in achieving the Africa we want as enshrined in the **African Agenda 2063**.
 6. Honourable Members, **the governing party in the Province, the African National Congress** remains committed to build a better Africa focusing on peace and solidarity. The ANC remains steadfast in its resolve to address the challenges facing the African continent, including global forces, leadership development and civil society engagements.
 7. It is a day to spotlight African innovation, culture, art, music, and economic growth. From the booming tech hubs in Kenya and Nigeria to renewable energy breakthroughs in Morocco and South Africa, Africa is rising. Celebrating Africa gives the world a chance to see the continent beyond outdated stereotypes.
 8. Moreover, Africa Day fosters **continental solidarity**. It reminds African everywhere – from **Cairo to Cape Town, from Dakar to Dar es Salaam** – that we share a common heritage and a common future. At the time when global cooperation is more vital than ever, this unity is not just symbolic - it is strategic.
-

9. From an economic development point of view, as a continent, we need to embrace agreements such as the **African Continental Free Trade Area**, which seeks to enable local businesses to produce and sell goods and services to a market of almost 1.3 billion people across 54 African countries. As Mpumalanga, we are relying on increased intra-African trade as a critical enabler for economic growth and sustainable job creation.
10. The trade agreement present the much-needed opportunities for our small businesses to expand into the African market. Additionally, the increasing demand for consumer goods in Africa provides opportunities for our small enterprises in manufacturing to supply goods like bricks, roof sheets and nails.
11. Some may ask: Why should we celebrate Africa Day when the continent still faces challenges such as poverty, conflict, and inequality? My answer is simple: **celebration is not the absence of struggle - it is the recognition of perseverance**. Africa Day honors the spirit of independence, the courage of our leaders past and present, and the vision of a unified and thriving Africa.
12. As I conclude, it is common course that the continent is exceptionally rich in mineral resources, possessing a significant share of the global reserves for various commodities. The continent boasts a large portion of the world's gold, platinum, Cobalt and diamonds. It also holds significant reserves of chromium, manganese, and other essential minerals.
13. As we debate this very important day, we have to remind ourselves of our collective responsibility to ensure that our **God-Given** mineral resources are used to stimulate economic growth and better the lives of our people, particularly the downtrodden.

Thank you very much Madam Speaker!
