



WELCOMING ADDRESS BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF MOGALE CITY LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, CLLR DANNY THUPANE AT THE PRESIDENT’S AFRICA DAY CELEBRATION HELD ON THE 25th MAY 2023 AT CRADLE OF HUMANKIND, MOGALE CITY

Thank you Programme Director,
His Excellency, President Cyril Ramaphosa,
Minister of Sports, Arts and Culture, Zizi Kodwa,
Premier of Gauteng, Panyaza Lesufi,
Honourable councillors here present,
Leaders of government departments and your teams,
Leaders of society across various sectors,
Distinguished guests,
People of Mogale City,

The Government of Local Unity in Mogale City is privileged to be part of this august gathering to celebrate Africa Day. We are thrilled that the organisers chose our City of Human Origin to mark sixty years of the organised voice of Africa as represented by the Organisation of African Unity and its successor, the African Union.

It is commonly known that the OAU was formed to liberate Africa from colonialism, imperialism, and apartheid. When the thirty-two heads of state in Africa met in 1963 to spearhead that gallant fight against injustice visited on the African people, here in Mogale City four patriots from the oldest township in Mogale City; Petrus Ntshole, Richard Motsoahae, Thomas Molatlhegi and Josiah Mocumi of the PAC’s Poqo were found guilty of trying to topple the apartheid government and were sentenced to hang by the neck for daring to stand up against that evil system. They were executed a year later on the 16th of June 1964.

When the democratic government organised the reburial of the Munsieville Four, the sister of one of these martyrs recalled how the apartheid state behaved on the day they were executed and buried. Mama Peggy Ntsoahae told us that an Afrikaner officer told them to wait for an unusual sound around 6pm, after which the relatives would know that their loved ones had died.

They were told to go to Mamelodi Cemetery where these brave men were buried as paupers. In her words, she said,



“What a brutal burial! We were not allowed to sing, those officers threatened us when we tried to pitch a song. We buried them in total silence and tears!”

Therefore, Programme Director, before the Soweto Uprisings of the 16th of June 1976, Mogale City had already reckoned with the execution on the 16th of June 1964 of the Munsieville Four. Like South Africans all over the country, the resilience of the people of Mogale City did not dissipate because of relentless persecution by the regime – even with the threat of death hanging over our heads. We could have been in tears most of the time, but we were never ever going to be silenced.

It is in Mogale City that many brave men and women found an exit route that connected them to the porous borders of the apartheid state into the countries of Africa; Botswana, Zimbabwe and many others. Here they were received and built a ready machinery to fight for the freedom of South Africans in particular and Africans all over the continent.

It is that brotherhood that we came here to celebrate today. Ours is an effort to recapture our passions for resistance to evil and embracing the good. We are required by time to rekindle the values that made us to despise the greed of colonialists, the cold heartedness of discrimination and exploitation, to build solidarity that propelled us to where we are today.

The generation that spearheaded the formation of the OAU were not doing it for themselves but generations after them. Posterity requires us to have similar foresight!

As we open our arms to welcome you in the City of Human Origin, we want to reassure you that our passion to defeat the challenges of poverty, inequality and joblessness will never die. We, in the Government of Local Unity, know Mr President and Premier that you are men who love ideas and let us share a few with you.

Mogale City is the resting place of Dimitri Tsafendas, the man who stabbed Hendrik Verwoerd to death. Verwoerd holds the unenviable badge of being the architect of apartheid. Tsafendas spent his last days at the Sterkfontein Hospital and lies buried in an unmarked grave at the Sterkfontein Cemetery. The ward he spent his time in has been preserved for posterity. We want to preserve his grave and we are working hard to find it.

Mogale City is the place that gave a young Moses Kotane his first job when he trekked from Ikageng in Tlokwe like many others to seek a better life around the city of Johannesburg. He worked here milking cows and cleaned a photo studio and earned himself one pound –ten shillings a month. Kotane was fired when he asked for an increase to two pounds per month and that it is how the roots of his communist outlook were planted.



Mogale City is one of the cities that Oliver Reginald Tambo vowed to visit soon as he came back from exile. He had relentlessly led the banned and exiled ANC for three decades and in that period, among the shining stars of the army of Umkhonto WeSizwe that he also led as Commander in Chief, he lost in battle our local heroes Mojau Teme, Jacob Padi, the Maponya brothers Odirile 'Mainstay' and Japie, and many others. OR Tambo did visit this city before he died.

Mogale City is the city whose young children brought Chris Hani to tears at the last rally of the ANC in Randfontein on the occasion of the first democratic elections when they sang the songs, *Kutheni Na* as well as *Avance Populaire*.

Mogale City is also unfortunately the place where the assassination of Chris Hani was hatched and the gun that executed him was given to the assassin. The children who had brought Chris Hani to tears were asked to sing *Avance Populaire* at his funeral and they did that with tears flowing down their eyes.

Mogale City is a place of the valiant. It is named after Chief Mogale of the BaPo who fought gallantly in the last frontier wars to defend the land from the settlers who were driven by their insatiable greed and were unafraid to take limb, land and life. Chief Mogale was unfortunately defeated and banished from this, his and his people's land.

Now, President, Minister and Premier, the Mogale City Tourism Atlas does not only speak about these stories of gallantry. It also points to this important site where we are gathered - the Cradle of Humankind which was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1999. Our Atlas also says that we do know that the African Union Commission which is the secretariat of the AU is based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

We also know that the Pan African Parliament has its seat in Midrand. We would like to interest you in a permanent site for the location of the Pan African Parliament here in the City of Human Origin so that Africa – the home of civilisation – can properly connect with her origins. We are open to that discussion which is linked to the envisaged Smart City near Lanseria Airport.

With these few words, we want to welcome you to the City of Human Origin. Let Africa keep fighting until every square inch of the continent is free from the clutches of colonisation and imperialism.

We thank you.