



Speech delivered by Executive Mayor Francis Makgatho on 16 June 2020 live on Westside FM

The Youth of Mogale City
Fellow Politicians listening
Members of our community
Students

Ladies, Gentlemen and all Listeners

From Mogale City, the city of human origins, I extend a warm welcome and greetings to all of you.

This year's commemoration of June 16 takes place under extraordinary circumstances as our country and the entire globe is faced with an extremely unfriendly scourge, the corona virus known as COVID-19. Resulting from this, we also restricted in the nature of how we commemorate this historic day in that we rather engage remotely and not commemorate this day with our Youth in hundreds due to this unprecedented situation of the COVID-19 pandemic. Before going into the detail of my address, let me also take the opportunity to thank Westside FM and my office who made this dialogue possible.

I feel honoured today to speak to the Youth of the broader West Rand and Mogale City in particular on this very significant day of June 16, celebrated across the country as Youth Day. Whilst educating those of us who may not know and at the same time reminding those who do, today marks the 44th commemoration of the 16th June 1976 Soweto Youth Uprising. The events of June 16 1976, which began in South Africa's largest township and spread countrywide changed the socio-political landscape in South Africa and as much as many lives were lost, it brought a new verve in fighting the oppressive apartheid regime.

On this day we continue to honour and pay tribute to the Youth of South Africa who lost their lives protesting against the laws, particularly the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction (therefore compulsory) in black schools throughout the country. In response to this and long endured oppression at the hands of the former regime, the Youth of 1976 in protestation proved that a revolution led by the youth will never be defeated. The country remains grateful and indebted to them for the sterling role they played in the struggle against apartheid.

The spirit of 1976 showed that our youth had solid unity and also a clear purpose of what they wanted to achieve. Starting with the fight against the use of Afrikaans, the language of the oppressor, their end target was to fully rip apartheid apart. From as early as 1974 when the apartheid government made Afrikaans compulsory in black schools the youth began organising themselves under the South African Student Movement (SASM) supported by the Black Conscious Movement, as well as the South African Students Organisation (SASO). It was on this day of 16 June 1976, when a demonstration led largely by high school students took place, angering the apartheid government and met with brutal force by police. This sparked a wave of protests and violent conflict with police across South Africa. These uprisings, largely influenced by Steve Biko's philosophy of black consciousness saw protestors carry placards and united in song, with one poster reading as: "*If we must do Afrikaans, Voster must do Zulu*". From this it's notable that the decolonisation of education finds its roots in the 1976 protest.

As alluded to earlier as much as my speech today will not focus much on the history of this day, it's important that we educate ourselves and always remember the events of this historic day. Our focus should therefore rather be on what lessons can take from the day of June 16 1976 and how to deal with our challenges in our present day terrain.

Today:

This day represents the strength and power of the Youth

This day represents the undying spirit of young lions

This day represents the resilience of the Youth

This day represents the fees must fall movement

This day represents skills revolution

This day represents emerging young entrepreneurs and business people

This day represents the young go-getters who go out there to make sure they succeed against all odds. This day represents the Youth of Hekpoort, Magalies, Munsieville, Kagiso, Swanneville, Rietvallei 2&3, Azzaadville, Muldersdrift, Tarlton-Matshelapad and Smoke Down and the rest of the entire Mogale City who are prepared and determined to work hard and go extra mile to achieve his/her or their goals. Therefore, as Youth always bear in mind that your own resolutions to succeed are more important than that of any other person. This day furthermore represents the Youth who take lesson from disappointments, obstacles, challenges, failures and build on them. Lastly, this day also gives us an opportunity not only to reflect on the events of the past, but presents an opportunity to focus on issues that affect our Youth today and implement long lasting initiatives to empower them for the future. As Madiba once said, *"do not judge me by my successes, judge me by how many times I fell down and got up again"*. As a country, a city, parents and nation which population is constituted by more than 1/3 (a third) of Youth – we faced with other major struggles that in the same spirit of this day of June 16 we encourage our Youth to face.

Gender based violence (GBV)

The scourge of gender based violence is not only embarrassing but very shameful to say the least. Ongoing brutal killing of the defenceless women at the hands of those who purport to love them, leaves a bitter taste in one's mouth. This very brutality and violence committed on our girl-children, sisters, mothers, Grandmothers and all female folk should stop immediately. Tshegofatso Pule's last words, "I want to come home" as captured by *City Press* on Sunday are so painful. Women's lifeless bodies are discovered on a daily basis. The violence and femicide cases in our country are at crisis level and therefore as men we should hang our faces in shame. In doing so, our Youth of today should be at the forefront of this terrain of struggle. Since gender-based violence thrives on silence we should all speak out about it - men should shout out and say "not in our names", so that there's a deliberate effort to instil good values and upright character in our boy children, teaching them to practise gentlemanly conduct towards girls and women at all times.

Poverty and unemployment

The Youth should explore opportunities offered by government to become job creators rather than job seekers. In the spirit of those who sacrificed their lives on this day of 16th June 1976, I urge you to take on job creation initiatives and robustly engage government to partner with you. SMMEs are a great vehicle to create jobs and as such we commit through our Department of Local Economic Development (LED) that we will support job creation initiatives in Mogale City. The Municipality has invested in great Youth projects that should not only eventually create jobs but introduce Youth into the mainstream local economy of Mogale City, the Province and our country. These among other includes:

The Chamdor Automotive Hub

The purpose of the automotive hub is to expose our local SMMEs to modern equipment and techniques of operating their businesses. To achieve this, we assist with formalising and developing their businesses and facilitating economic transformation in the townships as it's

part of different spheres of government to revitalise the township economy due to its economic potential. To date, ten workshops have been renovated and fitted with the high technology equipment at the Chamdor training centre. This will create jobs for SMMEs in the automotive sector as well as for the unemployed young people with semi or no skills at all in Mogale.

The Agricultural Parks

The Agricultural parks are currently creating jobs in the agricultural sector by giving unemployed people and the youth opportunities to participate fully in the sector. The Agri Park in Tarlton is one such example where a group of unemployed youth are working. The City together with the National Department of Agriculture are in a process of developing a fully-fledged Farmers Production Support Unit in Tarlton. As part of that project 20 new tunnels, 10 Jojo tanks and a borehole have been installed. Two local young people are operating the tunnels with the support of SAB.

Swanneville Agri Park

Our Department of Economic Services has partnered with Harmony Gold to establish an Agri park in Swanneville. The park will also create reasonable business and work opportunities for unemployed people and Youth in the area.

Ekasilab

This is an innovative township hub targeting youth in the ICT (information and Communications Technology) sector. The Ekasilab has already been established at the Chamdor training centre and will be fully operational once the Covid-19 pandemic has subsided.

Culture of teaching and learning

The recent torching and break-ins of schools is counter-revolutionary and against a Youth spirit of freedom, growth and success. Whilst our Youth should be at the forefront of protecting their schools as propellers of achieving the said success and other objectives, these schools belonging to local communities are instead being destroyed. In doing so we forgot that the culture of learning and teaching also dies. This behaviour from some of our Youth is breeding this opposite and much opposed culture. Education, education and more education should be the obsession of our Youth since without education these future leaders will be lost. As part of our contribution towards building an educated youth in Mogale City, the Office of the Executive Mayor is offering bursaries to aspiring young people in Mogale City annually, who want to study further in Institutions of Higher Learning.

Covid-19 pandemic

And last but not least before I leave you the people of our beloved city, we just cannot forget and place enough emphasis on our current situation. As the country and the whole world battle the global COVID-19 pandemic we have to remain focussed on fighting this plague and rebuild a society post the disease. In carrying out the fight against this pandemic, we once more urge you at all times to continue taking all the precautionary measures, comply with the current regulations and make every day a June 16 day – a day with purpose, a day with an end in mind, a day to always remember. This day, June 16.

REMEMBER TODAY: STAY SAFE, ONLY LEAVE HOME WHEN IT IS ESSENTIAL TO DO SO, PLAY YOUR PART, PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS