

Keynote address: Kwasa 23 Years Reunion

Speech by: Cllr Sishange
Event: Kwasa 23 Years Reunion
Venue: Valley Trust, 1 Zulu Reserve Road, Botha's Hill
Date: 26 October 2018
Time: 10h00 – 13h00

Programme Director,
The Provincial MEC for GCIS,
Representatives from MDDA,
Former board members and staffers of Kwasa,
The media professionals who gave their time 23 years ago,
Valley Trust leadership - past and present,
KZN Community Media Forum,
Community Representatives,
Municipal and corporate sponsors of community media,
Business people, local, provincial and national,
Advertisers and potential advertisers,
Representatives of community, commercial print and digital media,
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen,
All Protocol Observed

Siyanibingelela sinamukele kulolusuku le-Reunion

Unfortunately, our Honourable Mayor of the eThekweni Municipality uMama uZandile Gumede could not be here but directed me to come and address this gathering on her behalf. I am indeed honoured to be standing here addressing this reunion.

The story of Kwasa is the story we want replicated in every corner of our country, every township, every rural village, every town, every city. We want this story replicated in every industry. We want those who have resources and in the know to share their time, resources and know-how with those from previously disadvantaged background. This they do not just to lip-service or as an obligation but as an honour. There lies the future of this country where the previously dispossessed are emancipated and enfranchised. There need to be real and tangible change.

This future of this country is held hostage by abject poverty, by deepening inequality and rampant joblessness. The division between the haves and have-nots is worrying. We have too many people with nothing to lose and are angry, desperate and most of all are disillusioned. They are easy fodder for populists who manipulate them with big and empty promises. They are led astray.

What happened here in 1995 is exciting and gives us all hope. We all know the role of the 4th estate that of informing the public and keeping everyone in power in check. The lack of transformation in this industry is legendary. The lack of alternative voice or view is well documented. So Kwasa gave us hope then and gives us hope now.

The fact that it is community based is brilliant in that it is not outsiders reporting on issues they don't care and don't know anything about. It is local people who are in touch and care about the issues. Their reporting is factual and it is because they care about the subject and they ensure their reporting is sensitive and accurate and is based on facts. The press today is indeed full of fake news as some president is fond of saying.

The fact that this is in vernacular is another feather in the hat of Kwasa. Yes, according to the constitution our languages have the same status. The fact is however the African languages don't get the attention they deserve. *Sinecala lokuthi izilimi zethu zibukeleke phansi. Lapho umuntu ekwitiza ngesiNgisi sonke siyaquma kodwa uma ekhuluma olukaMageba hhayi simbukela phansi. Kungani abelungu bebodwa emzini yabo abasilokothi isiZulu kodwa thina sisodwa uzwa sesikhuluma ulwimi lwabo?*

It was uTata uNelson Mandela who said and I quote, "when you address someone in English you speak to his mind, if you address them in their language you speak to their hearts." End quote. We are pleased ezakwaZulu News is in isiZulu. Keep up the good work.

We know it is not easy. We know there are stereotypes and you have to deal with daily. Community media is definitely the way to go. It teaches on relevant issues. Its reach is deeper than national media. It is free so the poorest of the poor have access to it and

they are enriched, inspired in a way that no other publication could.

Ladies and gentlemen we are pleased with this celebration. We have said we want this to be done in every industry. We encourage people who are resourced to make it a mission to share meaningfully with those who were previously dispossessed. The future of this country is there. The current trend of the rich getting even richer and the poor getting even poorer unfortunately doesn't bode well for us all. The trickle down economy where the rich get all the perks and all the niceties whilst the poor get the scraps at the end of the day is not sustainable in the long term. The fact that this divide is along racial lines is not helping. The majority is still languishing in deep poverty whilst the minority owns all the means of production and all the resources.

We call on industry to take legislation meant to redress the imbalances of the past seriously. Legislation such as BBBEE and Employment Equity provides a brilliant framework for those who want to help change the narrative in this country. Companies lip-serving in this area does not help. The report by the Employment Equity Commission that shows little transformation in the workplace is not pleasing at all. The fact that some companies are fighting against the Department of Labour in court is indeed disheartening. It worries us a lot as it simply means there are people who don't get it!

They should be transforming and using those funds to sponsor and mentor SMME's, to provide bursaries and scholarships, to train people in the pipeline to take over in the management positions. The future of this country is the sharing of expertise.

We want to acknowledge those companies and those individuals that are doing all they can. They give us hope. They understand that we have a shared future not a barricaded or secluded one. Unfortunately, some people in position of influence think we can reverse the progress made and revert back to cabbage patch mentality where everyone lives securely in their isolated, leafy suburbia whilst there is rampant poverty in their doorstep. The trade war going on right now and the much talked about Brexit unfortunately are testament to people wanting to go back to the laager mentality.

As eThekweni Municipality we are about service delivery and economic transformation. We are mandated to eradicate poverty and create employment and reduce inequality. We are therefore pleased with Kwasa and subsequently ezaKwaZulu News. We want you to go from strength to strength. We wish you all the best for your future. *Manene namanenekazi siyabonga ukuba lapha. njengoMasipala wenu silwa nobubha, ukungasebenzi nokucwasana ngokwebala nobuhlanga. Iphephandaba elinjengaleli liyasiza kulempi kakhulu. Ukuthi ekuqaleni abantu abanolwazi nabanezinto zokusebenza balekelela ekuqeqesheni nasekusizeni kuyinto esiyigqugquzela ukuba yenziwe iwona wonke umuntu yonke indawo. Ikusasa lalelizwe lilapho.*

Thank you