



**Address by Her Worship, the Deputy Mayor Cllr Fawzia
Peer on the Occasion of the Gandhi Development Trust
International Day of Non-Violence**

01 October 2016 - 09h30

Phoenix Settlement or Gandhi Settlement in Inanda

- Programme Director,
- Board members and trustees of the Gandhi Development Trust,
- Recipients of the awards,
- Sponsors and stakeholders,
- Esteemed guests,
- Members of the media,
- Ladies and gentlemen,
- All protocol observed,

“Non-violence is a weapon of the strong.”

“Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man.”

“Non-violence is not a garment to be put on and off at will. Its seat is in the heart, and it must be an inseparable part of our being.”

“Non-violence and truth are inseparable and presuppose one another.”

“Nonviolence is the first article of my faith. It is also the last article of my creed.”

“Non-violence is the article of faith.”

Ladies and gentlemen, I choose to begin my address with these powerful quotes by the great Mahatma Gandhi.

These quotes are pertinent to the important occasion we celebrate today.

We are gathered here to celebrate the life of social activist Mahatma Gandhi, whose birth anniversary - 2 October – was declared an International day of non-violence by the United Nations in 2007.

Ladies and gentlemen, the task of bringing about greater social cohesion in South Africa lies at the very heart of what our nation represents, as it is stated on our coat of arms, "Unity in Diversity".

We have taken great steps towards the goal of achieving a unified and socially cohesive country, even more so when we remember the segregated and divided society we inherited after the end of apartheid.

Despite the painful conditions that existed when our democracy began, and the progress that has been made so far, we must to be honest that there is still much work to be done before we are able to say that we live in a cohesive nation.

Since 2015, South Africa has seen the increased cases of public racism, especially on social media, widespread unrest on our campuses as students raised the issue of transformation within our heritage sector and very sadly the violent outbreak of xenophobia aimed mainly at our brothers and sisters from across Africa.

This is unacceptable and we should never allow these incidents to happen again as they taint the transformed South Africa that we have fought for. We must be drivers of social cohesion, peace, tolerance and non-violence. That is a South Africa we dream of.

In doing so, government cannot do it alone; we need civil society to work with us in being the engines of social cohesion in our communities.

The question at hand is how do we build strong civil society structures. We cannot dispute that civil society has been an effective advocate of social change in South African communities. Going forward, government must form partnerships with civil organisations.

We must involve them in government initiatives and we must also involve civil organisations in the decision making stages. If they are fully involved, civil organisations can be the drivers of government programmes and messages in our communities.

Key features displayed by strong structures are seen when demonstrating their value as facilitators, conveners and innovators. When playing this role, civil society organisations need to ensure that they retain their core missions, integrity, purposefulness and high levels of trust.

The world will always need independent organisations and individuals to act as watchdogs, ethical guardians and advocates of the marginalised. Civil society in all its forms has an important role in holding all stakeholders, including itself, to the highest levels of accountability.

Through our civil society, we must drive the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi in our communities.

We must work together to promote non-violence and social cohesion to build our future generations.

Thank you!