



## **MATJHABENG MUNICIPALITY**

### **RACISM IS AN ANTI-THESIS OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

South Africa commemorates the 22<sup>nd</sup> Human Rights Day on 21 March 2016 since the advent of democracy. The celebration of this year's Human Rights Day coincides with the historical moment of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa in May 1996.

This day is celebrated in South Africa consciously to commemorate the callous massacre of unarmed African protestors in Sharpeville on 21 March 1960 by apartheid white police service. 69 people were brutally murdered on this day. It is also crucial to underscore that the Africans that protested on this day were marching peacefully for the inalienable human right of freedom of movement which had been curtailed by the apartheid government through the imposition of Pass Laws.

When the apartheid government could no longer sustain itself as a result of internal mobilisation of dissent and international isolation, its leaders were forced to submit to the inevitability of negotiations. The Convention for a Democratic South Africa produced an interim constitution of the country that took the nation to its first democratic elections in 1994. The Government of National Unity was constituted with the ANC as the majority party, precisely to capture the spirit of our oneness and indivisibility as a nation.

Two years later in 1996, on 10 December, our founding president, Dr Nelson Mandela, signed final constitution into law. Our constitution became one of the most celebrated in the world given its unequivocal commitment to the promotion of human rights. These rights are embellished in Chapter 2 of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights. Our constitution commits to the realisation of these rights comprehensively – political, social, economic and environmental. It enjoins all of us to respect the inherent dignity of human beings and guarantees everyone the right to life. Importantly, the guarantee of access to these rights is not based on considerations of race, gender, religion, ethnicity or any form of physical distinction.

While discriminatory laws have been abolished, it is regrettable that we have seen the resurgence of racism in our country since the beginning of this year, leading the President of the country to direct all of us to commemorate this year's Human Rights Day under the theme "Racism: not in my name". It is for this reason that the Office of the Speaker in Matjhabeng Local Municipality, as it has become customary in the last 3 years, is partnering with the Department of Basic Education to commemorate this important day in our calendar.

On Thursday, 17 March 2016, we convened the session of school learners to debate the notion of racism and how it undermines both democracy and the development of individuals and of a nation. We are encouraged by the fact that young people categorically denounce racism and agree that it has no place in our present and future South Africa.

Specifically, young people called for local government structures to strengthen its programs on building social cohesion and ensure that there is continuous engagement and exchange of ideas with all social partners on how we respond to this repulsive problem. We have heeded the call and commit to ongoing building and rebuilding of all great work we have been doing in facilitation of social and economic development of our residents. The constitution makes development a human rights issue. It further makes consultation with the residents in development processes a human rights issue. We respect and abide by the constitution.

We therefore want to call on all of us to have frank dialogue on the costs of racism. None of us benefit from it. It dehumanises both the perpetrator and the victim. It soils the good image of South Africa. All of us must stand together and say “#NOT IN MY NAME”.

**Speaker**

**Charles Stofile**

**Notice 14/2016**

