



**Department of Human
Settlements and Public Works**

KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

OFFICE OF THE MEC

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**ADDRESS BY KZN MEC FOR HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND
PUBLIC WORKS, MAGGIE GOVENDER TO THE
ROSEHEIGHTS PRIMARY SCHOOL ASSEMBLY – 1
November 2010.**

The Principal and Staff

The Chairperson and members of the school governing body

Learners present

We meet here at a time of great significance to the community. No - I am not referring to the Sharks' tremendous achievement in winning the Currie Cup, although that is also something we as people of KwaZulu-Natal must celebrate – I am referring here to Deepavali. Deepavali, the Festival of Lights, represents the triumph of good over evil. This is a universal message. At this time of year families gather to celebrate the end of a period of sacrifice and fasting. Gifts are exchanged, new clothes are worn, sweetmeats are shared and fireworks are lit as part of the festivities.

It is a time of especial enjoyment to young people. However it must also be a time where all of us exercise care. We must be careful not to harm ourselves with fireworks and in

particular we must ensure that we do not harm others. Animals are at great risk at this time of the year and I urge all of you to behave responsibly in order to ensure that animals are not harmed. This means obeying the rules – not lighting fireworks outside of the hours that have been set and not flinging crackers and other fireworks all over the place. If these simple rules are followed everyone will have a good time.

This year is also significant because of other important events that have occurred in South Africa. Earlier this year our country hosted the FIFA 2010 World Cup tournament. As all of us know there were many who believed that our country would not be able to pull off hosting this massive event. We proved them wrong. We hosted the World Cup magnificently and proved to the world that South Africa was more than capable of doing great things. The World Cup was also able to bring all of us closer together as a nation. It was wonderful to see our flag flying high everywhere and people mixing freely at Moses Mabhida Stadium and at the fan parks. Everyone was keen to demonstrate their pride in being South African. Indeed, we did feel it and it was here. You have been fortunate because you will be able to tell your children that you were there when South Africa hosted the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

I am proud, as I am certain, we all are that many in Chatsworth heeded the call and as true patriots had become volunteers for the period of the World Cup. Let us commend these people as they are remained true to the spirit of the forebears who arrived here 150 years ago. They did not ask for financial return but provided a service to our country and our people.

Shortly after World Cup we celebrated a further significant event. Nelson Mandela's birthday was a party celebrated by the entire world. This year was the first celebration of International Nelson Mandela Day – a fitting tribute to one who has dedicated his life to our freedom and indeed to the cause of humanity as a whole. Madiba belongs to the ANC and to the South African nation – he was born here and the work that he has done through his organization for the nation moulded him into the icon that we cherish and respect today - but we share him with the world as well.

The only gift that Madiba required was 67 minutes of voluntary service in our communities – one minute of our time for every year that he spent in service of the nation. I am certain that many of you here have heeded this call. These two events have a common thread and that is service – doing what is right for a good cause and for your country.

This year we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the arrival of Indian indentured labourers in South Africa. This event is part of our country's rich history and is something that is to be celebrated by all South Africans. Our government recognises and this was shown when President Jacob Zuma announced that the 150th anniversary of the arrival of Indian indentured labourers in South Africa would be a national celebration.

So what exactly is being celebrated? We must recognize that our forefathers came to this country looking for a better life. The indentured labourers took the bold step of leaving their homeland to come to South Africa in search of a new life and better future. It was not easy. They struggled but this country did not let them down and today here we are. This 150 years celebration is about the contribution of people of Indian origin to the development of South Africa. The Indian community has made a tremendous contribution to our country's development in every field of human endeavour in the country – education, health, commerce, arts, science, research and politics.

Here too there is a common thread – the thread of service and of building the country and the nation. Our forebears instilled in us a practise of self-help. They did not look elsewhere for support or handouts. So we must celebrate people like young Robyn Moodley who has represented our

country in the female under 17 World Cup and who has set her sights on joining Arsenal, we must celebrate the achievements of Papwa Sewgolam, Hashim Amla and Jonathan Vandiar. We must celebrate the contributions of those who fought apartheid to get us to where we are today – Valiamma, Billy Nair, Mac Maharaj, Ahmed Kathrada and many others. We celebrate Prof. Jerry Coovadia, an internationally respected health scientist, who serves on the National Planning Commission, Pravin Gordhan, our Minister of Finance and Ivan Pillay, the Deputy Commissioner of the South African Revenue Services (SARS). We also celebrate the newly appointed Minister of Communications, Roy Padayachie and Deputy Ministers Yunus Carrim and Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim. We also celebrate Jay Naidoo, the first secretary of COSATU and judges Dhaya Pillay, Thumba Pillay, Chiman Patel,

Zac Yacoob and Navanetham Pillay. We mourn the deaths of Lenny Naidu, Krishna Rabilal and Ahmed Timol who were killed by the forces of apartheid and celebrate the creative achievements of Jay Pather, Ronnie Govender, Kessie Govender and Surendran Reddy. It is a proud history and a great achievement. It is something that all South Africans must celebrate along with Madiba's years of struggle and along with our successful hosting of the 2010 World Cup.

Most importantly we must celebrate how we as South Africans have served and are serving our country well.

So while this is a time of rejoicing and festivity it is also a time of reflection. It is a time to take stock of where we are as a community and what we are going to do for the next 150 years.

The universal lessons of Deepavali apply as relevantly as ever to us as today. Today we must embrace the values of thrift over waste, honesty over corruption and hard work over short cuts. As MEC for Human Settlements and Public Works I come into daily examples of individuals trying to milk the state for quick money. I am certain that with the support of the community we can get value for money, reward honesty and hard work and ensure that this, and future generations appreciate our contributions as we respect and honour the contribution of our forebears.

May you have a safe, peaceful and enjoyable Deepavali.