

OPENING ADDRESS AT THE FIRST FEDERAL COUNCIL MEETING OF 2014

25 JANUARY 2014

AT LEGAE

SIPHO MFUNDISI

PRESIDENT

We owe it to Him who keeps us from falling and presents us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy that we are yet alive and see one another's faces. Some who were with us when we closed in December are not here, some have been promoted to glory, some are confined to bed, some are still wandering in the streets of party seeking while others just could not make it because of unforeseen circumstances.

For us who have made it to this place today we need to make a joyful noise and rejoice because we are yet alive biologically and as a political party.

We have seen the first Federal Congress since the renaissance of the party come and go with no glitches at all. We owe it to all members of the party from across the length and breadth of the Republic that seven provinces were represented and the eighth had a mishap and apologised. You have set a record which will take long to even let alone to beat. Thank you for that.

The Grade 12 results set the pace in the New Year. All provinces did well and the host province, the North West, surprised even itself by coming second after the Free State. Congratulations to all those students and we hope they will be able to continue to study further.

We are aware however that the results had to be good. The Department of Basic education was faced with a dilemma of retaining more students and not be able to cater for them in the new CAPS approach. They just had to make them pass to make room for the new intake that has been following the new curriculum.

Even before we settled into the New Year, the government was at it again. Because people have had years without potable water, they decided to march in protest against being denied this basic human right. Three people succumbed to police gun shots and in the fracas Michael "Bra Mike" Tshele our one and only photographer of note died as a result of gun shots.

We condemn the man's death in the strongest possible terms. Bra Mike could not hurt even a fly but his blood and three others' watered the grass of Mothutlung. This and other dastardly acts of this nature will haunt the ANC government to perpetuity and I have no doubt in my mind that when we call the roll of all those killed by the police in broad day light the writing should be on the wall for the ANC.

Where are the 34 Marikana mineworkers, the 15 soldiers who were killed in the Central African Republic under unexplained circumstances, Andries Tatane, Mido the Mozambican in East Rand and Bra Mike and the other three who were killed at Mothutlung? This list does not exclude the

mechanic in Secunda who also died in the hands of four police officers, two of them women and Tshepo Babuseng of Durban deep in Roodepoort who was shot in cold blood this week. No government that claims to be the government of the people should be allowed to continue in office with blood dripping from their hands.

It is very strange that in the Mothutlung saga four people died and only three people were removed from their lucrative jobs yet they remain councillors. They will continue to draw salaries but Bra Mike's family is left destitute simply because he stood up to speak loud to say there is no water.

Very funny, no one in government denies that they knew that some people had precipitated the closure of pipes so that cronies could tender for ferrying water.

While Damonsville and Mothutlung had no water the town of Brits had water because whites are in the majority there. That is democracy for you, ala ANC.

The leadership never had time to rest. On 16 December we laid Mme Sapphira Monare to rest in Ga-Khunwana. She succumbed to road injuries. On the same day the Deputy President represented the party at the Union Buildings at the unveiling of the Mandela statue and he had occasion to address the nation alongside the President of the Republic and other party leaders and representatives.

Like we reported before, we had occasion as a member of the Collective for Democracy to make our intentions of co-operating with other parties known. I hope the chairperson will allow discussions on these issues and this one in particular.

We are heading to the general elections before the winter this year. A plethora of political parties has hit the scene. It is for all of us men, women and the youth to stand up and hold the flag of the UCDP aloft. This party has survived onslaught after onslaught and we dare not allow it to be vanquished under our care. The UCDP is a survivor

Elections deal with manifestos and candidates. Candidates should be men and women of substance, In September last year we gave out criteria to follow in nominating candidates. We hope each province will be able to give our Chief Electoral Officer the necessary information in time to avoid disappointments.

The manifesto committee has completed the assignment. I hope they will allow the discussion of the slogan so that never again should members of the party be critical of the slogan we use. We are left with the date for the launch. As for the detail it will be made known on the day of the launch. We wish we could all go along. None should be spectators and critics whose job is to find more faults with the leadership than what even our opponents find wrong with the party.

To run elections we need money. To participate in elections money is needed. The party is a voluntary organisation which people join because of their love and conviction for the policies and principles it espouses. To make a dent on the elections we shall come to you to ask for money.

Whatever resources we had have been depleted by the endless fight for the soul of the party in the courts against someone who has always held that "democracy" is best known by him and will be according to his dictates.

That protracted tedious legal wrangle has left the party financially scarred.

While on the question of the elections, I hope those who sought to use the race or tribal card during the run up to the Federal Congress will appreciate that we need all the votes from all people in this country, Afrikaners, AmaZulu, Basotho, AmaXhosa, Bapedi, Basotho, Jews, English and will appreciate that in South Africa Batswana are few and that their vote alone will not secure us enough seats even the North West legislature. I invoke this debate so that people who subscribe to the Constitution of the UCDP and its principles and policies should know and remember at all times that this party is non-racist, non-sexist, non-tribal, non-regional and is a party for all who live in the Republic and are prepared to live by its dictum,

It is unwise for one to go along by night recruiting people to vote for one using tribal and Bantustan vocabulary. Some of us stood up and rose above most even during those archaic days of Bantustans because we did our work and never spoke badly about others.

I challenge all the nocturnal travellers and recruitment agents to present new arguments for debate as the tribal ticket has failed and will fail for good. In politicking let us play the ball not the man.

As members of the United Christian Democratic Party, let us unite in true Christian spirit because united we can end the onslaught of our opponents but divided we will continue to suffer.

The party is seized with trying to assist people who worked in the erstwhile Bophuthatswana whose pensions have been misused by Cosatu. We say this on authority because the Financial Services Board has audited all organisations of private sector pension funds and found out that hundreds of millions of rand belonging to people who contributed to the Sefalana Employee Benefit Organisation (SEBO) later to be known as Bosele have been swindled. We shall not rest until justice is done for people some of whom we know are adherents of the ruling party. Our aim is to uphold the name of this party that whatever was wrought through the efforts of this party.

We pray much your strength even as we trudge on this arduous road.

While we have the leadership to shape the media campaign we hope members of the party will write articles in newspapers, engage in debates on facebook and take part in radio talk shows and when debates are held in public halls will flock there to participate.

It is mete and proper to state that members have to acquaint themselves with the Constitution of the party. Federal Councils are not meetings for all people. Branches must be resuscitated or where they never existed be launched. Provincial structures must take charge and form regions. Provincial Executives must call provincial councils where all regions come and take the directives from the Provincial executive. The provincial executives must give direction and leadership to the regions and the regions ensure there are branches.

The constitution dictates that we have only four ordinary Federal Council meetings per year which means the provinces should hold more regular meetings.

We hope you have registered as voters and encouraged members to do likewise as next week end will be last chance to register before the elections.

We also note that today is voting day for members of traditional Councillors in the North West Province. It is unfortunate some of you will not be able to elect traditional councillors of your choice.

Madam Chair, there is much to deliberate upon today. Our mandate is to plan, organise, lead and control this party and we intend to do just that. We are not going to be haphazard and go to the extent of saying mongwe le mongwe a tle Federal Council while there are people whom the Constitution identifies as members of the Federal Council.

Sit back and enjoy your membership of the UCDP, but be prepared to work hard hard. I can tell you this executive have come to accept me as a workaholic and they too have sleepless nights. How I wish all of us in the party can remember the days of “Re tla le fufulelelwa, Sethitho se fetoge madi”

May you have robust, yet healthy deliberations.

I thank you