

UCDP Congress

29 January, 2011

Acceptance speech: UCDP President Hon MN Matladi

I would like to thank thee Almighty God for guiding, leading and protecting the UCDP to arrive at this destiny. May He always be with us. "If God is on our side, who can be against us"

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude for the confidence bestowed on me today. On my own behalf, and on behalf of all the women gathered here today, and on behalf of all the voiceless women, I say thank you for the loud and clear message you've sent across.

Thank you to the men and the youth that voted for me. You did not only vote for me, you voted for your daughters and granddaughters, your wives and partners, your sisters, your mothers and your grandmothers. You voted for freedom and for equality. You said no to sexism, which was never part of our African cultures, you said no to gender prejudices and stereotypes, which are in essence foreign concepts to us. In this act, you've acknowledged that men and women are equal, they have differences, they lead differently at times, but remain equal. You have acknowledged that women have been leaders since the beginning of time. The fed opinion that women cannot lead, is a fallacy disputed by history of all races and all peoples of the world. You have exposed it as a lie today.

Thank you to the women that voted for me. You did not just bestow confidence in me and my leadership, but you've made a statement bigger and louder than that. You've relegated and dissed the back row seat for the front seat, next to your counter-parts and equals. Each woman, that has cast a vote for me, has in essence said to herself :

"I'm capable, so is Mavis Matladi; I can lead, so can Matladi; I'm intelligent, so is Matladi; I believe in myself, hence I believe in Matladi; I can do it, so can Matladi; I deserve it, so does Matladi"

To everyone and anyone gathered here today, if you take only one thing in all that I will be saying, let it be my gratitude because I have learnt the power of gratitude. I am grateful that I am here today, and I'm here because I'm grateful to all the places I've been to and grateful to all the people that have taken me there, one way or the other. I am what UCDP has made me to be, I am your product.

I have commissioned a desktop research on the performance of our party since 1999. In 1999 National Elections, we had a total of 125 280 votes and 97 755 of those votes came from the North West province.

In 2004 we scored 117 792 votes and 86 476 of those came from this province. 2009 saw us get 66 086 votes with 43 855 from our province.

In Provincial elections (North West): 1999 got us 144 612, April 2004 saw us get 143 515, and April 2009 scored us 82 608.

In Local Government Elections 2006, North West Province, the total number of votes was 44 862 and in year 2000 it was 70 860.

These numbers make me very sad but most definitely not despondent. My sadness is because of the fact that it seems the UCDP had started on very high note back in 1999 and the numbers have been dwindling backwards in all categories, National, Provincial and Local Government.

One person, one vote. This means for each vote that we received, each person had put their trust and confidence in us. They believed we had their interests at heart. I believe we had our peoples' interests at heart. Between 1999 elections and 2009 elections we have lost 59 194 votes or people. What happened to those votes, what happened to those people? What is it that they saw in our leadership back in 1999 that they could no longer see in 2009? How have we let their trust and confidence down?

In my tenure as a leader of this party, I intend finding answers to these questions and addressing them. And moreover, I urge everyone of us, who is committed to this party and what it stands for, to go and find answers to these questions and address them.

With such a loss, it is undisputable that we need to recognise and acknowledge a need for change, and remove barriers that hinder that

change from happening. Each of us need to be champions of that change and I commit myself to pioneering that change. We need to model a change in leadership values. We can only succeed in being a people of influence if we live and conduct ourselves in a manner and form we expect others to.

As we embark on this journey of change which undeniably starts today, lets not lose sight of priorities. The biggest priority being to earn the trust of the people for the upcoming Local Government Elections. Let's see today as a rebirth of our party and go out in numbers to announce to all that we are here and are committed to carrying our people's mandate and their interests. Of course there's so much work lying ahead of us, so many ills to be bettered and so many wrongs to be made right.

But I stand today to say: "Nothing that is wrong in our party that cannot be corrected by what is right." We have all come a long way and nothing can deter us now. We have set values and shall hang on to them. We've done many things right and shall use that experience in making the wrongs right.

UCDP come, let us unite, work together and build the party to its highest level. The sky is the limit.

Thank you for your time.