

DEBATE ON THE YOUTH MONTH

UCDP : HON MN MATLADI

WEDNESDAY, 2 JUNE 2010

We commemorate youth month and youth day as a direct result of the events of the 16 June 1976. As we do so I would like us to remember and give thought to the words uttered by Mrs Nombulelo Makhubo, mother to Mbuyisa Makhubo, an 18 year old boy that carried a dying Hector Peterson.

Ma' Makhubo said "Mbuyisa is or was my son. But he isn't a hero. In my culture, picking up Hector isn't an act of heroism. It was his job as a brother. If he'd left him on the ground and someone saw him jumping over Hector, he would never have been able to live there."

I quote Ma'Makhubo's words because we need more Mbuyisa's in the youth of our country more than we ever did before. Picking Hector was no act of heroism but an act of brotherhood that characterised the youth of that era. The challenges that the youth fought against then, still persist today, probably in a different form and manner.

Our youth face unemployment and poverty, but instead of seeing the legacy of brotherhood left by Mbuyisa and his likes, we see youth leaders who are so self absorbed, greedy and corrupt, who cannot pause for a moment and pay attention to the plight of their brothers and sisters. They enrich themselves with corrupt gains from tenders and cannot see the poverty that's killing their counterparts.

This month we pray for a consciousness that would recall the sacrifices of the youth of yester years and the richness that comes from laying yourself down for your fellow. We pray for youth leaders that do not claim to be heroes and leaders when they cannot pick up a dying Hector.