

OPENING AND WELCOMING REMARKS

**Mr Vusi Madonsela, Director-General, DOJ&CD and co-chairperson of NAP
Steering Committee**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE ROUNDTABLE AND DIALOGUE EVENT TO MARK
THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH AND RELEASE OF THE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN
AGAINST RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA AND
RELATED INTOLERANCE**

HELD ON 25 MARCH 2019

ST GEORGE HOTEL, IRENE,

CITY OF TSHWANE

Programme Facilitator, Mr Thulani Genville-Grey;

Deputy Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development, Mr John Jeffery;

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen;

Greetings to you all!

Let us rejoice that we behold this day. For those among us, who have lived under apartheid for many years, let us be thankful that we have lived to witness this bright and happy breaking of this auspicious morn, which marks the inauguration of the first steps towards the practical implementation of our country's National Action Plan Against Racism, Racial discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (the NAP).

To be sure, this is a propitious occasion which brings happiness beyond the common allotment of Providence to the people of our country. It is auspicious, indeed, full of present joy and gilding with very bright beams the prospect of a non-racial future, marking the dawn that awakens us to the spirit and letter of the Supreme Law of our country – the Constitution.

The purpose of today's occasion is to mark the official launch and release of South Africa's NAP, as approved by Cabinet on 27 February 2019. In putting it together, this occasion has been conceptualised as a Roundtable Dialogue by and among women and men of many parts, representing a cross section of stakeholders, role-players and social partners, specifically designed to provide space for robust engagement on the NAP.

As more fully appears from the attached programme, you will notice that there will be a slot specifically allocated for a facilitated discussion and engagement on the NAP, focusing in particular on its practical implementation. You would all have also received copies of the full text of the printed NAP books, as well as its simplified versions in the form of NAP booklets.

These documents are also available online, from the website of the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, from whence they can be downloaded. During the next financial year, commencing 1 April 2019, the Department will have these texts translated into other official languages.

The particular objectives of this occasion include:

- To highlight the aim, purpose and provisions of the NAP;
- To create public awareness, rally the nation around the NAP and to build ownership for its implementation.
- To mobilise various stakeholders and all sectors of society to action during the implementation phase imminently upon us, in the new financial year commencing 1 April 2019/2020;
- To strengthen existing networks and encourage collaboration across different sectors and formations; and
- To reaffirm the Constitution as the cornerstone of the country's democracy and instrument for development and transformation, and thus to reinforce the culture of human rights.

For this reason, and as you will have noted from the programme, we have invited representatives from key sectors to provide short inputs in pledging their commitment and support for the NAP. These contributions will follow immediately after the Deputy Minister's keynote address. Many of these sectors have been part of this long journey of developing and finalizing the NAP with the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development over a considerable number of years. They, together with various other sectors, will also have crucial roles in the period that lies ahead to enable and ensure the successful implementation of the NAP.

I take this opportunity to convey our words of appreciation to all our partners who assisted in the realisation of this significant national milestone. A special word of gratitude goes to Ms Yasmin Sooka, Executive Director of the Foundation for Human Rights and co-chairperson of the NAP Steering Committee, all members of the NAP Steering Committee, the NAP project team, as well as our main funder, the European Union, here eminently represented by the Ambassador, Dr Marcus Cornaro, who has provided support throughout this process.

It would be remiss of me if I did not convey a special word of thanks to the Honourable, the Deputy Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development, Mr John Jeffery, for the political guidance and support he provided during the process of the development and finalisation of the NAP, leading to its approval by Cabinet. Similarly, I convey special thanks to Ms Carol Johnson-Newham from the Deputy Minister's office, for her invaluable technical, research and drafting support.

The timing of today's event is also very significant, being Human Rights month. As a country, South Africa recently held the 4th annual Anti-Racism Week from 14 – 21 March, which culminated on national Human Rights Day, which was commemorated in Sharpeville last Thursday, 21 March 2019, which day also marked the UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

It is a circumstance of happy augury that today's official launch of the NAP, is three days before the second anniversary of the passing of anti-apartheid leader, Mr Ahmed Kathrada. Uncle "Kathy", as he was affectionately known, began the process of consultations on the

NAP with the Department three years ago, during Human Rights month, when the official commencement of the public consultation process on the Draft NAP was announced and launched in Cape Town.

Since then, the NAP has evolved into a living document which firmly places the issues of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance on the national agenda. In the premises, we felt it most fitting to honour Uncle Kathy at today's NAP launch event, and for this reason you will note the symbolic segment on the programme dedicated to his honour.

Forever remembered shall be this day which finds South Africa weary and distressed, broken in many things but spirit, poor in many things but faith and courage. Our Roundtable Dialogue is a noble faculty of our nature as South Africans, which enables us to connect our thoughts, our pain, and our happiness with what is not so distant in place or time, and looking before and after, to hold communion at once with our ancestors and our posterity. We live in the past by knowledge of its history; and in the future by hope and anticipation.

Once again, I welcome you to this important assembly and wish us all fruitful deliberations.

I thank you for your attention!