



Remarks by H. E. Sibongiseni Dlamini-Mntambo at the South African Investment Seminar on the sidelines of the G7 Summit, 8 June 2018

His Excellency, President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa,

Honourable Minister Edna Molewa, Minister of Environmental Affairs of South Africa,

Special Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My fellow South Africans,

Good morning, Sanibonani, goeie môre, bonjour.

Mr. President, it is my honour to welcome you to Canada. Perhaps before we start with the proceedings it is appropriate that I remind the audience that this year 2018, South Africa is celebrating the centenary of Mama Albertina Sisulu and the father of our nation, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. Two struggle icons on whose shoulders we stand on.

I should therefore be forgiven for stealing the introduction of the speech President Mandela made in 1998, during his second visit to Ottawa. At a reception hosted by the Governor General 20 years ago, President Mandela said <and I quote>

“I am told that Ottawa is one of the coldest capital cities in the world. But from our experience one would never know that. The people of this city have warmed our hearts with their welcome and made us feel that we were at home away from home.” <end quote>

I am sure that the warmth of Ottawa extends to the economic heartland of Canada too, this sprawling and beautiful city of Toronto. This is the city where money never sleeps.

Ladies and Gentlemen, South Africa is fast-approaching the 25th commemoration of the achievement of democracy. This will be a celebration of our struggle to overcome the injustices and crimes of colonialism and apartheid. We continue to celebrate the return of human dignity to the majority of South Africans, we enjoy the benefits of our incredible Constitution daily. We have witnessed dramatic improvements in households with access to basic services like electricity, water and sanitation; and we have seen decreases in the levels of poverty in South Africa.

On the economic front, our economy has ballooned, we are an active member of the Southern African Development Community and the G20, and we are the most diversified economy on the continent.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have been High Commissioner for a year now, and as a diplomat we like to keep things nice and polite. But this is a business seminar. Let's roll up our sleeves and get dirty. In my short 14 months I have travelled the length and breadth of Canada, meeting with different stakeholders who would ask questions and developments in my country. The questions range from "why South Africa did not sign the Africa free trade agreement; what opportunities are there for Canadian investment community given the Africa trade agreement; the land issue; the mining charter etc."

I remember Mr President when I gave a presentation last year in Toronto , the issue of corruption became topical. So, today I am positive that you will get more clarity on these issues.

You see, even as we celebrate all our achievements, we recognise that "happily ever after" is hard to achieve. We continue to face threats to our society from many fronts, from the evils of poverty, unemployment and inequality. Let's roll up our sleeves and talk about how we can work together to address these challenges.

Indeed, a South Africa that is unhindered by the stubborn legacies of apartheid will soar. Investing in a healthier, happier and wealthier society is not only a moral imperative that governments have to follow, but a sound business decision too.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is now my honour to introduce our keynote speaker, a man who needs little introduction.

In this year of Nelson Mandela's centenary, his foundation continues to remind us that Madiba – as he was fondly known back home – lived his life by three rules: free yourself, free others, and serve every day.

As a young boy from Soweto, President Ramaphosa *freed himself* by studying law at the University of the North in 1972. Ironically, as his mind was freed, his physical freedom was curtailed. His involvement in student politics led to him being detained by the apartheid police, who eventually held him for 11 months in solitary confinement. A second imprisonment followed in 1976 when he was held for six months.

He then must have realised the importance of Madiba's second rule: *free others*. In the 1980s, he found the National Union of Mineworkers, where he was pivotal in making the union the most powerful union at the time, with membership rising from six thousand to three hundred thousand during his tenure.

Madiba's third rule, *serve every day*, is reflected across the impressive pages of our President's curriculum vitae. After his 1991 election as ANC Secretary-General, he served as head of the ANC's negotiation team that worked with others to bring down apartheid: not with guns, but with words. After our first democratic election in 1994, he oversaw the drafting of our new Constitution. You see, he is the living embodiment of Thuma Mina.

He has received many awards and recognitions, ranging from the Olof Palme Prize to several honorary doctorates.

In December 2012, he was elected Deputy President of the ANC before being appointed as Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa in May 2014. In December 2017, he was elected as President of the ANC. Just over three short months ago, Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa was sworn in as the fifth democratic President of the Republic of South Africa.

Ladies and gentleman, please join me in welcoming our President, His Excellency President Ramaphosa to Canada and to the podium.