REMARKS BY THE MINISTER OF STATE SECURITY, Hon. DAVID MAHLOBO, MP, ON THE OCCASION OF THE FIRST COMMEMORATION OF THE PASSING AWAY OF FORMER PRESIDENT NELSON MANDELA, 05 DECEMBER 2014, FREEDOM PARK

Programme Directors

Mama Gracia Machel

Chief Zwelivile Mandela and the entire family

His Excellency the Acting President of the Republic, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa

Other Excellencies, Imminent Persons and Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Fellow Cabinet Colleagues

Premier of Gauteng Province, Mr David Makhura

Mayor of City of Tshwane, Mr Kgosietsong Ramakgopa

Acting CEO of Freedom Park, Ms Jane Mufamadi

Veterans of our liberation struggle

The Director General in the Presidency and all other Directors General

Leadership of ANC, COSATU, SACP, SANCO

Leadership of CONTRALESA

Leadership of the various interfaith denominations

Captains of Industry

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen
Fellow compatriots

1. We gather here today to mark the first anniversary of the passing away of our first democratically elected President, uTata Nelson Mandela.

2. His glorious and extra ordinary journey which lasted a good 95 years came to an end on this day, last year 05 December 2013. The entire continent and indeed the world was shaken by the fall of this revolutionary leader, lawyer, boxer, internationalist, President, husband, father and true servant of our people, the father of our nation.

3. What followed in the 9 days of mourning and outpouring grief was unprecedented and it bear testimony to the fact that a nation had lost its founding father, who dedicated his life to the struggle of the African people and to the course of a non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous South Africa.

4. President Nelson Mandela was part of a leadership collective of the African National Congress (ANC) who dedicated their lives in fighting for freedom and democracy in South Africa.

5. He was arrested by the apartheid government and sentenced in 1964 to life in prison for high treason in the infamous Rivonia trial, together with his comrades Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, Raymond Mhlaba, Ahmed Kathrada, Lionel Bernstein, James Kantor, Dennis Goldberg, Elias Motsoaledi and Andrew Mlangeni.
6. Following a protracted mass resistance campaign against the apartheid government, negotiations, and the demand for the release of political prisoners, Nelson Mandela – who had become the face of the struggle for freedom – was released from prison on 11 February 1990.

7. He would later lead the ANC and other alliance partners in negotiations to end apartheid in the Convention for a Democratic South Africa's (CODESA) talks, and later, the Multiparty Negotiating Forum (MPNF). The negotiations culminated in the country holding its first ever democratic elections – for the first time allowing black people to vote – resulting in Nelson Mandela being inaugurated as the first president elected through democratic vote.

8. Throughout the negotiation process leading up to the democratic elections, Nelson Mandela advocated the values of peace, human rights, nation building, democracy, rule of law, justice and reconciliation. The government he oversaw as President of the Republic between 1994 and 1999 was a government of national unity led by a Cabinet collective comprised of members from all opposition parties.

9. During his time as President of the Republic, Nelson Mandela championed the issues of children and played a major role in securing their rights and directing government policy towards
ensuring their well-being. It was under his stewardship that in 1996, much to the awe of the international community, South Africa produced a Constitution hailed as the most progressive ever.

10. Today’s gathering - the First Commemoration of the Passing Away of former President Mandela - is aimed at ensuring that as a country and a nation, we keep Tatu Mandela’s memory alive and ensure that the values he espoused continue to guide us in our long and challenging journey which his Excellency President Zuma reminds us of every day when he says “Yinde lendlela esihambayo”.

11. Government has identified the following critical objectives for which we are gathered here. These serve as the purpose for this programme and the clarion call we are making to our fellow compatriots, the citizens of this country:

- To promote social cohesion in the country through joint remembrance of Madiba;
- To encourage South Africans, and the world, to continue living Madiba’s values;
- To engender a culture of giving as exemplified by Madiba throughout his life; and
- To nurture nation building by promoting Madiba’s vision – and the vision envisaged in the National Development – of a united nation working together to build a better South Africa.
12. As we mark this significant and historical milestone in our free and democratic country, let us all respond positively to the call of action of our government and keep alive the memory of the father of our nation in the work we do.

13. I thank you