

# Welcoming Remarks to the Dr WB Rubusana Memorial Lecture presented by the Executive Mayor of BCMM, Cllr Xola Pakati

17 March 2018

* **Programme Directors, Mr Fundam and Councillor Marata**
* **Members of the Rubusana Family**
* **Former Deputy Minister of Finance, Mr Mcebisi Jonas**
* **ANC Members of Parliament, comrades Charles Nqakula and Zukisa Faku**
* **Rev Mnyapha and all congregants of LLC Duze United Congregational Church**
* **Members of the Public**

**Ladies and Gentlemen, good morning!**

It is an honour for me to be afforded an opportunity to welcome you in this memorial lecture of Dr Walter Benson Rubusana, a true icon of our struggle, a committed Christian and an African cultural activist.

In the build-up to the January 8th Celebrations of the African National Congress this year held in our city, the newly elected President of the ANC led the National Officials of our movement in a visit to the gravesite of Dr Rubusana. The intention was to officially reconnect with the spirit of this great hero, thus receiving the much-needed blessings.

The President better conceptualised how the life and legacy of Dr Rubusana resides within our movement and how we always derive inspiration from it. At the Gravesite the President Ramaphosa remarked that:

"His intellect was one of those that really conceptualized the formation of the ANC. We are not only remembering them‚ but also deriving lessons from them as the party committed at its 54th conference last month to revive the party to be once again the leader of society”

This statement locates this Icon of our struggle not only at the centre of our history but are the core of our programme of renewal as a governing movement. The memory of great giants like Reverend Rubusana helps to reboot us and re-programs us back to our original settings – that of being driven by the need to liberate our people and thus make their lives better.

**Programme Directors,**

It is true that the Xhosa poet, Ntsikana ka Gaba, will always be remembered as the first African to have initiated the Africanisation and politicisation of the Christian faith. It is true that amongst the reasons he did this was because he saw the social justice message of Christianity, but he also wanted to protect the political freedom of the Gcaleka people under King Ngqika as he served as his advisor in the early 1800s.

It is on the other hand also true that Dr Walter Benson Rubusana will always be remembered as that instrumental leader who led the process of infusing Christianity into the formal conduct of organised and formal politics of resistance against colonial injustice. He is thus remembered as that leader who coined the battle cry, ‘Zemk’ IiNkomo Magwala Ndini’ which served to mobilise African people towards the formation of the South African Native National Congress in 1912, our present day African National Congress.

Reverend Rubusana was a man of many talents; a journalist, a religious leader, a politician and a freedom fighter. As we will hear today, he excelled in all those responsibilities having made a name for himself in each of them. He was what is now called an all-rounded cadre, capable of adapting to various situations whilst firm on the essential programme.

He was all of these because he was a product of the material reality of our people. His struggle for self-determination was inspired by the dispossession of Africans from their land. The zeal and determination which is illustrated by his life simply arose out of his distaste for the oppression and the dehumanisation of African people. As a Man of God, he saw that what was being done to the African by the colonialist was in contrast to the main message of the Gospel.

Our city is proud to be associated with the name, memory and legacy of Dr Rubusana and we are very humbled by the contribution that he made in the upliftment of black people in our area. This is why the ANC decided to ask the Rubusana family for the use of the name for our Region.

We did this knowing fully well that this name gave us prestige but also it carried a lot of responsibilities for our region. We welcomed the fact that the family allowed to use the name and we are grateful because our region has just been given international prestige and recognition just by the use of this name.

In the same vein, we know that we cannot be a Dr WB Rubusana Region just by name whilst we are known for all the wrong things that contrast with his legacy. This name thus forces the ANC in our region to be guided by the highest level of ethics and moral values as epitomised by the life of Reverend Rubusana. We are therefore in a path of cleansing our region of the destructive culture of love for money and material possession by some of our members into a culture of selfless sacrifice and service to our people.

The Rubusana family and his church must expect another visit and request for the use of the name from the people of this city. Our municipality just concluded a process of public consultation on proposed name changes for various areas of our city.

The Rubusana name is amongst the names that keeps on coming up in the engagements with our people. This is proof of the fact that Dr WB Rubusana occupies a very important place in the collective memory of our city and the psyche of its people.

We take pride in the fact that his legacy lives up until this day and it is quite interesting that such was his deliberate intention not a matter of chance. He sought to affirm the dignity of the African and this why in the preface to the second edition of his book, **Zemk'iinkomo Magwalandini,** he makes the following statement:

“Incwadi yamabali enjengale, kunye nezibongo ezikhoyo esiXhoseni, sekuyiminyaka umbhali lo ebona ukuba iyafuneka emzini, ngokukodwa kwimpi entsha evelayo, engazinto ngezinto zomzi esinguwo.”

We are still pursuing the fight of affirming the dignity of the African and our hosting of this lecture jointly with the LLC Duze United Congregational Church is within this light.

I want to again thank this opportunity that we are being afforded to welcome you in this memorial lecture and we confident that it will be a success.

I thank You!