

**SPEAKING NOTES (REMARKS) FOR THE PREMIER OF
THE FREE STATE, S.H NTOMBELA ON THE OCASSION OF
THE COMMEMORATION OF NATIONAL FREEDOM DAY, 27
APRIL 2021, IN BOTSHABELO, FREE STATE PROVINCE**

The President of the Republic of South Africa, His Excellency,
Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa,

Ministers present,

Members of the Executive Council,

Government Leaders,

Stakeholders present here today,

South African public in general including the media,

Setjhaba sa Botshabelo, seo re se etetseng, letsatsing lena la
kajeno.

We are indeed proud and humbled to welcome the President to
the Free State Province – the heart of Freedom, the birthplace
of democracy. It is indeed an honour to host you as we
commemorate this historic day known as Freedom Day.

The birth of our nation, a free and democratic South Africa, was
conceived on this day in 1994. It was on this day, exactly 27
years ago, when South Africans of all races, who, for decades

had been denied the opportunity to elect their preferred leaders, finally cast their votes to usher in a new dawn of hope.

Although we have made remarkable progress since 1994, inequality, poverty and unemployment remains one of the most glaring obstacles to South Africa's goal of national unity and social cohesion.

This inequality, poverty and unemployment has no doubt contributed to the surge of Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GDVF), which the President has correctly alluded to as a second pandemic, after COVID-19, which continues to manifest itself in our communities.

Ladies and gentlemen, this year is correctly dedicated to trailblazer, struggle stalwart, public intellectual, political activist and human rights campaigner Mme Charlotte Maxeke, given the patriarchal nature of our society, and the prevalent violence against women and girls in our society.

In honour of Mama Charlotte Maxeke, on this 150th anniversary year of her birth, we are pleased that the President has officially opened this 40-bed capacity treatment facility, befittingly named after her. This is indeed a symbolic measure in reassuring the South African society that government's commitment to gender equality remains strong and resolute.

The courage that Mama Charlotte Maxeke displayed in her lifetime, during a very difficult period in our country, is indeed inspirational. I trust that those who seek help to free themselves from substance abuse, will visit the centre and will receive the help that they so desperately need.

As we commemorate Freedom Day, let us remember that with Freedom, comes great responsibility - A responsibility to help those who need our help to realise the true freedoms of a fruitful life free of substance abuse.

Lastly, let us remember that this Freedom Day comes during a time when South Africa, and indeed the entire globe, grapples with COVID-19. I call upon all citizens of our country not to let their guard down. The fight is far from over.

Working together, we can defeat COVID-19 and all social ills South Africa faces, to ensure that we enjoy our hard earned Freedom, in harmony and prosperity.

I thank you.