

Ruth First Memorial Lecture 2013 – Trevor Manuel

## **12 months on: Marikana and its meaning for the Nation Development Plan**

Thank you for the opportunity to address you here this evening. This lecture is exceedingly difficult for at least three reasons.

Firstly, there is the fact that we gather to honour the memory of Ruth First. As Prof Jacklyn Cock reminded the audience six years ago, “At this moment of political opportunism, greed and corruption in both public and private sectors, we need role models who remind us of who we are, where we have come from and the price many have paid to bring us here. Ruth First is such a model. Living up to this legacy...is our current challenge.” I could not agree more strongly, especially in view of the deep passion and reason with which Ruth addressed the challenge of the migrant labour system in the mining sector in her writings.

Secondly, the Farlam Commission had its terms of reference gazetted 368 days ago, and it is still wending its way through the task at hand. We hope that it concludes its remit soon. I have the particular constraint of serving in Cabinet and there is nothing that I would wish to say that may appear that I am either prejudicing or anticipating the work of the Commission of Inquiry. We must give the Commission our fullest confidence.

Thirdly, there are enormous tensions in the mining sector; these may be aggravated during the wage bargaining season, especially in the platinum sector. The main cleavage amongst workers was one of the reasons that gave rise to the events at Marikana in August last year. I have a sense that the bifurcation will remain in the sector for some time. Some of this may spill over into other industries, across various unions. I cannot pretend to know, or anticipate any of this. Many of the observations about union organisation on the mines may also be subject to the flux of interpretation, some of which may be temporary in nature. I know that there are many in the audience better qualified than I am on the observations about union organisation. I merely express the view that it would be most unfortunate if our discussions here were side-tracked, when I readily concede my limitations.

I hope that we can discuss the issues at hand, frankly, in spite of the readily acknowledged constraints that present.

In 1770, Oliver Goldsmith penned the epic poem, *The Deserted Village*. The poem speaks of wealth and poverty and the uprooting of a people. Some of these lines remain relevant and fitting for the topic here. He wrote:

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey, where  
wealth accumulates, and men decay: Princes and  
lords may flourish, or may fade;  
A breath can make them, as a breath has made; But a  
bold peasantry, their country's pride, When once  
destroyed, can never be supplied.

We are free to decide who the flourishing 'princes and lords' may be, but there is no doubting who the bold peasantry, in this case removed and destroyed from the Eastern Cape and Lesotho, are. We can also confirm that once destroyed, they can never again 'be supplied'. More important here is his description of that land, 'where wealth accumulates and men decay.' Indeed, what have we learnt in the 250 years since that poem was first written about the human condition and about solidarity?

The poem goes to the heart of the problem. Surely, the challenges are about far more than the tragedy of Marikana, the mining sector, or even the cruelty of the migrant labour system. What is at the heart of the problem we need to discuss is what the systems of equity and fairness are, and are perceived to be. This is what makes the topic so relevant in the context of the life and contribution of Ruth First. . Ruth was a revolutionary, an activist, a journalist, a wife, a mother and an African. She was deeply committed to transforming society, with a focus on the lives of the most vulnerable. But she was also fiercely independent in her analysis. She read widely and in a course she taught at Eduardo Mondlane University on the "Politics of Class Alliances", she prescribed readings from a range of authors including Samir Amin, Walter Rodney, Ernst Mandel, Eduardo Galeano, Rosa Luxemburg, and Vladimir Lenin. No ideological strait-jacket and no mouthing of the analysis of others served the deep enquiry that shaped Ruth's life.

It should be the same with us here.

History has a strange way of making bedfellows. The National Development Plan was released to South Africans on 15 August 2012. On 16 August 2012, 34 mineworkers lost their lives in a bloody and violent labour dispute on a South African mine.

The causes of the Marikana tragedy are long in the making, going back at least a few centuries. The underlying causes of the tragedy stem from a history of colonial oppression overlaid with the exploitation of natural resources. They also stem from successive failures to address the living conditions of mine workers and their families. The causes of the Marikana tragedy stem principally from the unjust apportionment of economic gains for over a century and a half, leading to one of the highest levels of inequality in the world.

The National Development Plan too has deep roots. The values embedded in the Plan stem from the values espoused at the launch of the ANC itself over a hundred years ago. These values are about unity, about non-racialism and most importantly about the just apportionment of economic wealth in South Africa. These values are carried forth in the Freedom Charter, in the ANC's constitutional principles in the late 1980s and into our Constitution after democracy.

My talk today will attempt to trace the deep underlying causes of the Marikana tragedy and to provide a synopsis of the National Development Plan, setting out

its vision for a South Africa that is more inclusive, more prosperous and more people-centred. The story of Ruth First is reflective of the struggle for justice and equity in South Africa. The values that she lived through her life are now embodied in our Constitution.

As a country, we must use the Marikana tragedy as a lesson – a wake-up call. We need to deal with the proximate causes of the massacre, for which there is a judicial commission of inquiry, and the causes that are deep-seated that stem from our history. The National Development Plan is a vision and a detailed plan for a society in which all South Africans can share in the fruits of prosperity. With an entrenched understanding of our history, our Constitution obliges the state to both build an inclusive non-racial and non-sexist society and to take appropriate measures to redress the legacy of the past. The aim is to build a new society, a society both free of racism and sexism and one that is prosperous, where all the people of this land share in the fruits of its harvest.

Colonial oppression and racial exploitation, perpetuated for over three centuries, dominates our history. The discovery of diamonds in the 1860s and gold in the 1880s resulted in a dramatic turn in our fate. The tools and weapons of colonial expansion were trained on the exploitation of South Africa's natural resources, using cheap labour as the means of production. Land dispossession, forced removals, influx controls, poor education for black people and a sophisticated security apparatus were used to exploit our mineral wealth. Later, the migrant labour system, the homeland system and bantu education were added to the lexicon of exploitation, with a single purpose in mind – to exploit the land while denying black people their rightful share. So Goldsmith's 'Bold peasantry...when once destroyed' has been the essential shape of the creation of labour for the mines.

The Union of South Africa in 1910, the election of the Nationalist Party in 1948 and the declaration of South Africa as a republic in 1960 changed the nature of exploitation from a classic colonial one to a system where the exploiter was no longer foreign but locally based. The South African Communist Party, of which Ruth was a prominent member, characterised this as Colonialism of Special Type.

And so while the location of the coloniser shifted from Britain or the Netherlands to South Africa, the pattern of exploitation persisted. Black people were systemically denied their rightful share of the wealth of the country. The denial of citizenship and of the right to vote to black people were merely parts of a pattern of oppression aimed at generating wealth for a small minority. It is these injustices that drove Ruth and other South Africans to fight against apartheid, the system of racial oppression and the economic injustices that it produced.

The struggle against apartheid was not just against a system of racial segregation. It was also for economic justice. Economic justice was not defined as the simple transfer of assets or wealth from one group to another. It was about the dismantling of a system of preference and the creation of a system where black people would be able to take their rightful place as full citizens, as workers, as owners of businesses and creators of wealth.

The causes of the Marikana tragedy stem from this history and pattern of exploitation. While there have been positive developments, the system of migrant labour, of leaving one's family far away to work in difficult conditions deep underground for a relatively small return has not changed in a century and a half. Again, while acknowledging that there have been improvements in wages and living conditions, the relative returns to the small number of mine owners and managers stands in stark contrast to that of the workers or the communities from which they hail.

Ruth First was not just an activist and political leader. She was also one of the finest investigative journalists of her era. In one of her earlier and most incisive pieces, she described the conditions of workers on the potato plantations around Bethal in what today is Mpumalanga. The exposé into the shocking conditions under which workers toiled led to the famous Potato Boycott. Later in life, Ruth led a research project involving over 40 researchers into the lives and living conditions of Mozambican mineworkers working in South Africa. In many ways, the issues raised by Ruth in these exposés are not too different from the deep causes which gave rise to the tragedy at Marikana.

Along the same lines, it is appropriate that we recognise Gavin Hartford's analysis of the migrant labour system (the same references were used by Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe in an address to the Mining Lekgotla a few days ago). He writes,

The hard reality is that the pattern of migrant labour super-exploitation – characterised by 12 long months with only a Christmas and Easter break – has remained unaltered in the 18 (now almost 20) years of democracy.

There has been no overhaul and investment in the migrant labour system at all, There has been no attempt to find new ways to effect a more humane (shorter migration cycle and better paid) system of migrancy akin to the best migrant labour system in the world. There has been no effort to create a system that rebuilds the migrant miners nuclear family through short (3 to 4 month) work cycles; that would ensure a reinstatement of maximum remittances home to increase cash flow to the rural poor; that would significantly reduce the propensity for HIV infections; that would enhance attendance and reduce absenteeism driving up both productivity and ensuring that mining becomes a more attractive industry to work in and invest in. Sadly mining has remained a prisoner of its apartheid past in this core element of cheap labour sourced through a migrant's punishing annual work cycle and all the social evils associated with that cycle. No amount of employment equity plans and empowerment transactions have ventured to tamper with this spinal essence of the industry.

Implicit in the argument is that mining, by its nature, will continue to depend on a system of labour drawn from elsewhere. However, it is incumbent that we accept that without consideration to the humane treatment of mineworkers, the vestiges of the old order will seem to still shape the sector.

An alternative is to offer workers employed in mining a stronger incentive to bring families closer to the mines. This option, will require significant new investment, but cannot be rejected for that reason alone. It should be on the table alongside a series of other proposals.

Despite attempts by some mining companies to provide better quality accommodation, including for families, the system of migrant labour has not changed substantially. The truth is that the vestiges of alienation still remain. I often wonder whether as a society we ever really appreciate the extent of the dehumanisation of the migrant labour system, especially in mining. The performance of local municipalities and other spheres of government should also take some of the blame. Communities where miners live often have no schools, police stations, recreation areas, crèches and other basics that family life would require as a necessity. While it would be near-impossible to reverse the effects of urbanisation and informal settlements in a single generation, the frustration of many is that progress is exceedingly slow. This frustration is exacerbated when communities see municipal councillors and officials driving posh cars and living lavish lifestyles. The defence that, 'there is no money for development' rings hollow in the face of such extravagance by public officials.

Consider for a moment the elements of a settlement that create a liveable environment and a sense of community. They include housing; infrastructure to provide electricity, clean water and sanitation to households; shared public infrastructure such as roads, storm water drainage systems, public transport services, waste disposal facilities; and public spaces such as parks for recreation purposes. Settlements also need to have good schools that provide quality education, libraries, and healthcare facilities that provide quality care. The National Development Plan's notion of sustainable livelihoods encompasses this broader definition of development.

The provision of infrastructure is an important part of restoring people's dignity and affirming their worth. It creates a sense of pride of place and allows for public services to be provided on a sustainable basis. The type of infrastructure I have described above is generally not available in informal settlements and more specifically those in mining areas. The reasons for this date back to the migrant labour system and the accommodation of mine workers in hostels. This system was part of the edifice of the apartheid regime to exploit workers by paying them as single employees on the basis that their families had access to land and could farm.

The removal of the restrictive laws such as influx control that supported the migrant labour system opened the way for the emergence of informal settlements. It is estimated that there are 38 informal settlements in the platinum belt around Rustenburg. Census 2011 indicates that the 40 percent of households in the Marikana ward lived in informal dwellings, including backyard shacks. Contrast this with a national average of 15 percent. To illustrate, Lonmin employs some 28 000 workers but provides accommodation to less than 10 percent of this number.

According to the Mining Sector Charter by 2014 single-sex hostels should be converted into family units. This target is unlikely to be reached and even if it is met, it will only improve the living conditions of a small section of workers as the Lonmin numbers demonstrate. The workers who cannot be provided accommodated by the mine receive a living-out-allowance.

On the face of it, providing housing and infrastructure to ensure decent living conditions should be a straightforward task. Matters are complicated by how the responsibilities are allocated within government. Different authorities and sometimes in different spheres of government are assigned the responsibility for housing, water, land use management, roads and energy. The regulation and oversight over how these functions are performed is another critical area. In theory, the municipality should be the entity that coordinates the contributions of the different authorities towards producing a liveable environment. In reality this does not happen due to a myriad of reasons, including capacity constraints and limited intergovernmental co-operation. Throw into this mix the role of traditional leaders. In the case of Marikana, "Lonmin is leasing the land from the Bapo Ba Mohale traditional authorities". (Crisping Chinguno: "Marikana and post-apartheid workplace order", 2013) The community is divided between the new arrivals who mostly live in informal settlements and traditional communities from whom the land is leased and have certain entitlements.

Add to this the resource constraints. The creation of liveable settlements is driven largely by the provision of low cost housing. The budget for housing delivery determines how many units can be provided – and the housing waiting lists are quite long and subject of major contestations in communities. In these circumstances the focus of authorities is on providing the infrastructure and services to those who have been on the waiting list for longer – any other way they believe would be unjust. In other words even if we were able to coordinate better the efforts of government, the turn-around time would still be long due to resource constraints and yet leaving the situation that obtains in Marikana is untenable.

The tragic events of Marikana also indicate the worst effects of poor coordination between the actions and circumstances of mining houses, the workers and the government. Mining houses are not able to provide decent accommodation to all the workers and government cannot meet the growing demand for low cost housing. Faced with pressures on their incomes mine workers who receive living-out-allowances use these to supplement their incomes by living in informal dwellings. Understanding the complexity of the challenge is necessary to enable us to engineer solutions.

An added feature of the exploitation that workers experience daily is through the micro-lending system. Marikana had no fewer than 13 micro-lenders operating in its vicinity. Add in several less formal mashonisas and one gets a picture of vultures circling a carcass. Many workers are heavily indebted, and pay exorbitant interest rates and other fees that you and I would never even contemplate. Workers often borrow from one lender to pay another, with debt

ratcheting up each month. This phenomenon has severe implications for social stability and for labour relations. In spite of the best efforts of the crafters of regulations under the much-commended National Credit Regulatory Act, many workers still part with more than fifty percent of their gross wage to settle these debts, often through the much abused system of 'garnishee orders', that frequently cannot be traced back to an order of the court.

For mineworkers, and indeed for all South Africans, there is a feature of our present reality that is far more concerning than the living conditions of mineworkers. That concern relates to the nature of inter-generational poverty in our country. A mineworker would toil all his life if he were confident that his child would get proper health care, nutrition and education and that his child stood a high probability of getting a job that paid more than his wage.

In countries that are growing rapidly, the children of workers have much better opportunities than their parents. In South Africa, however, while it cannot be disputed that we have broadened opportunities since 1994, for many families, the probability of receiving good healthcare, nutrition and education is still too low. The probability of someone from a township or a rural area getting to university and getting a job as a professional is yet even smaller.

The compelling question that arises as a lesson of the Marikana tragedy relates to the system of industrial relations in the mining sector. The 1987 strikes broke exactly a century of acute exploitation, and gave rise to the National Union of Mineworkers. For the 25 years that followed, roughly a period equivalent to the working life of a mineworker, there was a sense of a broad

compact that obtained – rocked occasionally by particular wage or working condition demands, but the essential peace was as a result of that broad compact. It would appear that the key partners to that informal compact did not pause, reflect, re-mandate and renew the compact. The sense is that the comfort that obtained between negotiators resulted in the terms of that compact becoming outdated. The events since those that occurred at Implats in January 2012, suggest that the compact has been unhinged.

Having attempted to sketch an historical and contextual account of the causes of the Marikana tragedy, allow me to list some of the more direct causes. These include:

High levels of poverty and inequality

An economy that is not growing fast enough to ensure rising living standards for all

A huge degree of mistrust between the major social partners

An inefficient bureaucracy unable to deliver even the most basic services to poor communities

A fractious labour relations environment characterised by violence, intimidation and illegal strike activity; and

Weak leadership from all major social partners.

The transition from apartheid to a democratic society was a major step towards the realisation of the dream that Ruth lived and died for. She longed to live in a democratic and open society, based on the values of the Freedom Charter. She lived for a non-racial and non-sexist society. She was also firmly of the view that the wealth of the country must be shared more equitably among its citizens.

Those values find resonance in our Constitution today. We have a Constitution that provides both the liberal freedoms that Ruth cherished so dearly such as a free press, freedom of speech, equality for women, the right to form trade unions, an independent judiciary and equality before the law; as well as the socio-economic rights of the citizenry such as the right to education, healthcare, housing, social security and protection from crime and violence.

Our Constitution recognises that the state, broadly defined, has to champion the causes of the poor and the disadvantaged. It sees a state that has to intervene to correct the historical injustices by effecting redress. Our Constitution is crafted with an inherent understanding that to build a truly non-racial society, the country has to tackle the legacy of apartheid directly. The right to vote and to enjoy equal rights is a necessary condition for building a truly non-racial society; but that on its own

is insufficient to achieve a more equitable and caring society. For that, we need a people-centred democracy which cares for the poorest of the poor. We also need an economy that can grow fast enough and in a manner where the living standards of the poorest are improved.

Our Constitution seeks to create a more caring society where the human dignity of every person is respected. We have to ask ourselves, despite all of our institutions and achievements, have we really grappled with what is required to build social solidarity? Are we living up to the commitment to create a caring society? Have we made actual progress or have we underestimated the dehumanising effects of apartheid on our nation?

In June 2011, the National Planning Commission released a diagnostic document setting out the objectives of a plan for 2030 and identifying the key challenges confronting South Africa in realising those objectives. The objectives of the plan are to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030. The nine challenges that the NPC identified were that too few people work, the quality of education for black learners remains poor, the age and location of our infrastructure and the spatial legacy of apartheid is still exclusionary, we have a high disease burden and a failing public health system, an economy that is unsustainably resource-intensive, public services that are uneven and often of poor quality, high levels of corruption and the reality that South Africa remains a divided society. There is a substantial degree of overlap between these nine challenges and the causes, both deep and proximate, of the Marikana tragedy outlined earlier.

In November 2011, the National Planning Commission released a draft Development Plan. This draft underwent extensive revision as a result of a broad consultation process.

In August last year, the Commission released the revised National Development Plan. The Plan identifies six pillars that will need to underpin our efforts to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality. These are:

Uniting South Africans of all races and classes around a common programme to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality.

Citizens that are active in their own development, in strengthening democracy and in holding their government accountable.

Raising economic growth, promoting exports and making the economy more labour absorbing.

Focusing on key capabilities of both people and the country. Capabilities include skills, infrastructure, social security, strong institutions and partnerships both within the country and with key international partners.

Building a capable and developmental state.

Strong leadership throughout society to work together to solve our problems.

The first task is to unite all South Africans around a common programme, to unleash the talents and energies of all our people around the common goal of fighting poverty and inequality, to foster a unity of spirit. For this we need social cohesion, but this will remain a hollow call unless we can improve the life chances of young black people, unless the lives of children in the townships are comparable to that of young people born in leafy suburbs. Our constitutional vision is of a non-racial, non-sexist, prosperous and democratic South Africa; a country that belongs to all who live in it. The challenge facing us, all of us, is to make this a reality, to build a society that creates opportunity and a society that cares for all its people. We must recommit to and take renewed ownership of the values of our Constitution to appreciate the necessary inter-relationships between all of us as South Africans.

The second pillar is active citizenry. Working individually and collectively with others in society, citizens have a critical role to play in their own development and in the development of our country. This model where people sit back and wait for government to deliver is neither feasible nor consistent with our adopted 'people-centred' development model. In addition, citizens and communities have a responsibility to hold their leaders in all spheres of society accountable for their actions. What that means, is that it is up to every single one of us to hold the feet of leaders in society to the fire to ensure that the Constitution is implemented. The NPC accepts that the call for active citizenship is not always going to produce neat accords, raised and structured quietly in boardrooms, we must however endeavour to build a listening and responsive society that will outlaw the "political opportunism, greed and corruption" (Jacklyn Cock's words) that sometimes masquerades as active citizenry.

The feature of Ruth First that says more about her than any other quality was her activism; her desire for change was matched only by her willingness to get her hands dirty to work for that change. For South Africa to meet its objectives, we need many more people to become and to remain activists at heart, willing to get their hands dirty to effect change.

Ruth was an active citizen who also cherished the right to criticise even her own movement. While Joe Slovo, at least publicly, defended many of the practices of the Soviet Union, Ruth often spoke out on the excesses and abuses of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. She even challenged Slovo at public meetings about the SACP's defence of the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. Ruth also criticised the ANC when it banned the newspaper *World* from covering an ANC conference. According to Alan Wieder, when Joe Slovo was writing his famous paper reflecting on developments in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s titled 'Has Socialism Failed', he said that it was the voice of Ruth and her strident criticism of the excesses of public officials in socialist countries that most influenced his thoughts on the matter.

The third pillar is a growing and inclusive economy. Albie Sachs described Ruth First as 'made by both Lenin and the London School of Economics'. She was a revolutionary who understood economics and the importance of economics in policy. Without faster and more inclusive economic growth, it will not be possible to deliver on the socio-economic objectives that we have set for ourselves. We need faster growth to help pay for the development of capabilities such as education and infrastructure to improve the life chances of our youth. We also need an economy that grows in a more inclusive way.

Our economy is caught in a low-growth trap. To grow faster and to broaden the benefits of that growth, we require higher investment, better skills, rising savings and greater levels of competitiveness. Through employment growth and rising incomes from productivity growth, we can simultaneously reduce poverty and inequality. In fact, ladies and gentlemen, it is the only sustainable way to tackle poverty and inequality. The main target in respect of the economy is to raise employment by 11 million to 24 million by 2030. This will require an extraordinary effort. The notion of work is deeply embedded in the philosophy of the vision as well as the Plan.

The fourth pillar of the Plan addresses the need to build capabilities. Capabilities apply to both people and the country. For some, capabilities might be adequate nutrition or a functioning transport system to get to a place of work. For others, it might be a college certificate to boost the chances of getting a job. Or perhaps, work experience may just be what a young woman needs.

For the country, capabilities cover what broadband speed we would require, the amount of energy we would need to power a growing economy, port capacity to support a diversified economy or the water supply that meets the needs of households, industry and agriculture. Building capabilities is hard work and requires a time horizon that stretches beyond one, two or five years: it requires us to view our world through lenses that stretch over the next decade and beyond, then to diligently and doggedly build what is necessary.

The fifth pillar is a capable and developmental state. We define a developmental state as one that is capable of intervening to correct historical inequalities and to create opportunities for more people. A capable state needs to be professional,

competent and responsive to the needs of all citizens. We need a country that works for all, but particularly for the poorest.

How do we understand transformation? Is transformation merely about getting an education district director that is black or is it about ensuring that black children get quality education? If black children are getting high quality education, then frankly, the colour of the district director is irrelevant. Is transformation about changing the colour of the boardroom or is about getting companies to take a long term perspective about their own profitability and the development of the country? The fact that we would prefer both is not an excuse to blur the meaning of transformation as described in our Constitution. The focus of transformation has to be about breaking the mould where self-serving elites extract resources meant for the poor.

The sixth and last pillar is the responsibilities of leaders throughout society to work together to solve our problems. South Africa's progress in navigating the transition from apartheid to democracy was built on the ability of leaders to put aside narrow sectarian interests in favour of national interest, leaders who were able to put aside short-term political agendas for long-term benefit. To achieve the South Africa that we all desire, we again require leaders to put the country first, to put the future ahead of today.

There are few countries, liberation movements or political parties that can boast of the type of leaders that South Africa and the ANC has had over the past century. Ruth First is but one in a long line of highly capable leaders driven by a set of values and ethics that stand as beacons not just for South Africa but for the world.

Memorial lectures such as this one must go beyond merely reflecting on the lives and values of our great leaders. These values should inspire our efforts today to build the type of society that Albert Luthuli, Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela, Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph and Ruth First cherished. The struggle to build a non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous society and a more just world is not over. The attainment of democracy was merely a significant victory in this long struggle for justice. Much work still needs to be done.

Right at the heart of the challenge that confronts us is our collective responsibility to work tirelessly for the realisation of the values articulated in our Constitution. These will not appear as a cataclysmic reality one fine day. We must recast the conversation across society. This does mean being far less self-indulgent. It means that we must rebuild the trust across society, and assist in empowering those communities or segments of society that appear out of reach. I am prepared to admit that as strong as our National Development Plan is, we cannot pretend to have shared it with the workers of Marikana, or most other places of work. In part, there is the challenge of gatekeeping and in part, we have a failed system of communication in society. But more importantly, we do not give each other the necessary trust, nor do we take responsibility in the task of building our nation. The lessons of Marikana speak to what remains undone in our democracy. Repairing demands a much greater effort, especially from

ourselves, the elites gathered here this evening. The challenge of what needs to be done is so well articulated by Tony Judt in "Ill Fares the Land."

He writes

If we remain grotesquely unequal, we shall lose all sense of fraternity: and fraternity, for all its fatuity as a political objective, turns out to be the necessary condition of politics itself. The inculcation of a sense of common purpose and mutual dependence has long been regarded as the linchpin of any community. Acting together for a common purpose is the source of enormous satisfaction, in everything from amateur sports to professional armies. In this sense we have always known that inequality is not just morally troubling: it is inefficient. (p185)

Memorial lectures have to go beyond basking in the past glory of our leaders and our liberation. We must draw on the lessons and values of our Ruth Firsts to continue to strive for a more just society. The National Development Plan is a vision for a better tomorrow. That better tomorrow has to be built. It will not materialise on its own. The Plan is just a piece of paper. It has to be given life, meaning and substance through continued action in every facet of our society; be it by the Cabinet, in the board room, down the mine shaft or at the book club. The NDP provides a compelling narrative of how we can consolidate the gains of democracy and make faster progress in ensuring that the fruits of the land are shared more equitably among all its people.

As Goldsmith wrote

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey  
Where wealth accumulates and men decay.

A better tomorrow requires sacrifice and action from all of us, even in a democracy. A luta continua. The struggle for a just society continues.