

**SPEECH BY AMBASSADOR LEHOKO ON THE
OCCASION OF THE CELEBRATIONS OF 20 YEARS
OF SOUTH AFRICA'S FREEDOM GUINEA-BISSAU-
13 NOVEMBER 2014**

Programme Director,

Honourable Representative of the Government of the
Republic of Guinea-Bissau, Minister Carmelita Pires.

Honourable Ministers

Excellencies Ambassadors,

Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Representatives of the Business Sector,

Dear Friends,

Ladies and Gentleman,

Boa noite a todos, A luta Continua!!

I wish to thank the President for this opportunity to
speak to the people of Guinea-Bissau, on the occasion
of the fifth democratic administration and the
celebrations of the 20 years of South Africa's freedom.

I would like to thank the management of the Azalai hotel
for offering us this splendid venue to host our
celebrations.

I would like to thank the staff of the South African
Embassy for organising this event.

I also would like to thank my wife for preparing African cuisine.

I would like to thank the musicians and artists who are entertaining us tonight.

And I would also like to thank you all for honouring us with your presence tonight.

Dear Friends,

Our country has produced men and women of distinction, who have provided leadership during trying times, like the great Amilcar Cabral and the leadership of the PAIGC in Guinea-Bissau.

We are honoured to have as our special guests this evening, liberation veterans such as Mr Carlos Correia. Mr Louis Oliveira Sanca Ms Isabel Buscardini, Ms Francisca Pereira, Ms Carmen Pereira and many others.

Comrades, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Ours is indeed a country at work and is a much better place to live in. We will keep the momentum.

We have made good progress in the land reform programme.

Friends, we have a good story to tell in the improvement of health care too.

Life expectancy is now firmly on an upward trend. South Africans are now living longer.

Honourable Minister, South Africans are united in wanting a corruption free society. Fighting corruption within the public service is yielding results.

Democratic South Africa's foreign policy was shaped many decades ago during the fierce international campaign to isolate the apartheid state. ANC President Oliver Tambo played a key role in that regard, assisted by among others, the late Johnny Makatini, former head of international affairs.

Africa has remained at the centre of our foreign policy. We have worked hard to strengthen support for the African Union, SADC and all continental bodies whose purpose is to achieve peace and security. We have also prioritised the promotion of regional economic integration, infrastructure development, intra-African trade and sustainable development in the continent. This year we also submitted our third country report to the AU African Peer Review Mechanism which was well received. We continue to support peace-making and conflict resolution.

We will continue to strengthen relations with Europe, North America, Latin America, Asia and countries in the South. Participation in international multilateral forums

such as the G20 have been beneficial for the country. And joining the Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRIC) group in December 2010 counts as among the key achievements of the fourth administration. It was also a great honour to host the Fifth BRICS Summit on 27 March 2013 in Durban, which saw the participation of African leaders to discuss developmental cooperation with BRICS. We will continue to serve diligently in the United Nations in promotion of strong international governance. We will also continue promoting the reform of the UN Security Council and global financial institutions.

Dear Friends, As President of the COP17/CMP7 United Nations Climate Change conference which was hosted in Durban in 2011, South Africa successfully placed the world on an unassailable course, through the adoption of the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action.

Over the past 20 years we have hosted a number of international sporting and cultural visits, which has helped to boost social cohesion and unity.

In the past five years, South Africa hosted the highly successful 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup and other key soccer, rugby and cricket tournament, which left a tangible feeling of pride and unity among all South Africans. As we celebrate 20 years of freedom, we will do so having done well in building a new heritage

landscape for our country. A number of new museums and monuments were established, including the statue of Former President Mandela which has become a landmark in the Union Buildings. More than 2000 geographical names have been changed in order to correct the ill-naming of places, as well as to give communities the right to determine the names of their areas.

As a country we have scored many successes. South Africa is a much better place to live in now than it was before 1994. We continue to face challenges. But life will also continue to change for the better.

Nkosi Sikelel' i Africa,

God Bless Africa.

Viva Africa du Sul

Viva Guinea-Bissau

A luta Continua

Victoria é Cetta

I thank you.

Muito Obrigado.