



From Their Sacrifice to Our Responsibility

#ExecutiveMayor

Dear Residents of Johannesburg,

This past week, our city paused to mark something that runs deep in our collective memory: fifty years since the June 16, 1976, Student Uprising. I stood at the Hector Pieterse Memorial in Soweto alongside President Cyril Ramaphosa and thousands of residents to lay a wreath in honour of the young people who took to the streets that day. They carried no weapons. What they carried was conviction.

Young people like **Hastings Ndlovu and Tsietsi Mashinini** stood up against a system built to deny them dignity and, in doing so, changed the course of our country's history.

Fifty years on, I said to those gathered: this milestone is not about resting. It is about accelerating our commitment to the future. Freedom must live in every generation, which means we must remain accountable to our youth today by identifying the barriers they still face and assessing their access to real economic opportunities.

It is not by accident that so many young South Africans choose to live, work, and build their lives here in Johannesburg. That choice comes with a responsibility on our part: to listen and act on what young people demand of us. Johannesburg has changed enormously since 1976.

We have gone from a segregated city to a metropolis that welcomes people from every corner of our country, where the children of domestic workers and mineworkers have become doctors, engineers, entrepreneurs, and public servants. But the work that the Class of 1976 entrusted to us is not finished. Unemployment, inequality, and exclusion are the new frontlines.

To the young people of this city: the generation of 1976 proved that age is never a barrier to leading change. I urge you to pursue education, build businesses, and serve your communities. Government is here to walk that journey with you.

As a city, we are backing those words with action through youth employment programmes, support for small business development, and partnerships that open doors to skills and opportunities across Johannesburg. This work continues beyond commemoration; it is a daily commitment.

We bow our heads in honour of those who gave everything for the freedom we now enjoy. Let us build a Johannesburg worthy of their legacy.

Until next time,

Cllr. Sello "Dada" Morero

Executive Mayor | City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality

