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Department of Public Works  
Departament van Openbare Werke  
Lefapha La Ditiro Tsa Setshaba

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## OFFICE OF THE MEC

### PRESS RELEASE

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#### CHURCH HAS CRITICAL ROLE TO PLAY IN SOCIETY SAYS MEC YAWA

North West MEC for Public Works, Honourable Mr. Howard Yawa, MPL today paid tribute to African Independent Churches for the role they played in the struggle against colonialism, oppression and apartheid. He was addressing close to ten thousand congregants of the Church of Christ's Assemblies at the church's Headquarters in Ledig near Sun City.

MEC Yawa said the African Independent Churches played a crucial role in promoting a religious philosophy that was based on sound African value systems.

He said pioneers of African Independent Churches like Bishop Engenas Lekhanyane of the Zion Christian Church, Prophet Isaiah Shembe of the Nazareth Baptist Church (Commonly known as the Shembe Church) and Prophetess Catherine Ngcwelane, the founder of the Church of Christ's Assemblies made an important contribution in redefining what it means to be an African and a Christian at the same time.



Paying tribute to Mother Ma-Mbhele as the Prophetess was affectionately known to her congregants. He said that like struggle heroines, Lillian Ngoyi, Ruth Mompati, Dora Tamana and Queen Modjadji, the Prophetess personified women's struggle against racial, gender and class oppression and contributed towards the redefinition of the role of women in society and prepared the ground for the struggle for gender equality.

He said that the leadership of the ANC in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century were staunch believers, he cited that the first President of the African National Congress (1912-1919), John Mafukuzela Dube and the second President of the ANC, Reverend Makgatho as early founders of one of the early African Independent Churches, the United National Church.

MEC Yawa said the church has an important and critical role to play in our society today, especially in building a society that cares and is built on the foundation of strong moral values.

He called on the church to mobilise its constituency to assume its rightful role in strengthening the democratic system of governance by participating in the March 1 Local Government Elections.

"We trust that we will continue working together to make further advances in the second decade of our democracy to build a better life for all in our country."

concluded MEC Yawa.

**ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS  
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