

**SOUTH AFRICAN SCOUT ASSOCIATION
MACK OMEGA SHANGE SCOUT COMPETITION RALLY 2002**

**ADDRESS BY
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Thank you for inviting me to participate in the Mack Omega Shange (*Former Natal Commissioner for Scouting who presented the ideal face of African Scouting*) Scout Competition Rally of 2002. Throughout many years I have maintained close interactions with the South African Scout Association and I have had the honour to attend a number of its meetings. I consider this one significant however, because in meeting to hold this rally, we pay tribute to a man for whom I have always had the greatest admiration and respect. It is appropriate that Mack Omega Shange's name should be on the banner of this gathering. His exceptional leadership within the Scout Movement in KwaZulu Natal remains one of the most outstanding contributions to the development of goodwill and social solidarity which I have witnessed in our Province during my lifetime. His vision and dedicated service remain an expression of what lies in my own heart. Indeed, we shared a commitment to making education, personal growth, leadership, respect, integrity and discipline, central features of the development of young people in KwaZulu Natal.

Mack Omega Shange built on the foundation laid by **Sir Robert Baden-Powell**, the founder of the Scout Movement, more than 90 years ago. While the Scout Movement now operates in a multitude of countries throughout the World and attracts the participation of millions of young people, there is a special significance to the South Africa Scout Association. The international Scout Movement is not foreign to our soil, but was taken as a seed from this very place and planted in countries throughout the world. As a Commanding Officer in Her Majesty's army, Sir Robert Baden-Powell spent a significant and impressionable period of his life in South Africa. Being a naturally observant, keen discoverer, Sir Baden-Powell took note of the characteristics of African people, from our social structures to our children's upbringing. He was inspired by what he saw and was moved to ensure that his own experiences of the African way of life were not lost to anyone who could benefit from them.

History records how Sir Baden-Powell's experiences in the British army brought him into close contact with African traditions, for which he developed a deep and lasting respect. After the clash between the Usuthu section of the Zulu nation led by King Dinuzulu and the Mandlakazi section led by Zibhebhu in 1888, Sir Baden-Powell participated in the arrest of King Dinuzulu. It was during that time that Sir Baden-Powell discovered the Wood Bead Necklace of the King which he left behind during their pursuit of him. Traditionally, King Shaka ka Senzangakhona presented wooden beads to young men as orders of merit. These were considered highly valuable by Zulu warriors, not because of any intrinsic value in the bead, but because it represented their triumph in some test or battle, or the distinction of some heroic deed. King Dinuzulu himself wore at least 1000 of these wooden beads. Sir Baden-Powell, apparently unaware of the custom of presenting wooden beads to outstanding warriors, nevertheless mimicked this custom in the Scout Movement, bestowing the Wood Badge beads on Scouts who had completed a certain aspect of training. Since then, millions of young people throughout the world wear the beads as part of their uniform.

In 1987, at an important rally of the Scout Movement, the Chief Scout, **Garnet de la Hunt**, took from around his neck four Wood Badge Beads and handed them to me as the guest of honour at that event. In this symbolic way, the beads were restored to their rightful home. My mother, Princess Constance Magogo ka Dinuzulu, was King Dinuzulu's daughter. On my

mother's side, I am the King's grandson. I was honoured to receive this gift, because to me it was an acknowledgment that a Movement of such enduring dignity and success was birthed in our own country, among our own people.

It was here, on African soil, that Sir Baden-Powell discovered the importance of instilling discipline, competence and teamwork within young people. He developed the notion that by improving the moral make-up of a young generation, it is possible to forge a better humanity and, through this simple philosophy, he established a world-wide Movement towards the moral education of youth. The very first meeting of the Boy Scouts at Brownsea Island in England in 1907 was called to attention with the reverberating sound of the Kudu Horn. Today, much of what has become international practice in training Scouts has been taken directly from my own Zulu culture, and from the cultures of other African peoples. I am proud to know that the training and education of young people through such an admirable curriculum as that employed by the Scouts, was originally inspired by features so familiar to us as Africans. It reminds me that we have always been correct in placing such great emphasis on the development of our children as the hope of our future.

Throughout my life, I have considered it a priority to educate and train young people in order to empower them to seize opportunities and fulfill their potential, to the greater benefit of our society. I have dedicated much of my work to promoting education, education and education in South Africa. During my time as the Chief Minister of the erstwhile KwaZulu Government, I worked hand in hand with even the poorest of our communities to ensure that the right message could permeate our liberation struggle. During those days, there were powerful components of the struggle who had chosen the path of an armed conflict, and raged against the inferior education afforded to black people, by burning schools and keeping children out of classrooms with fiery speeches. Young people were provoked to destroy school buildings and to react with violence to the morally repugnant regime of apartheid. Chaos was welcomed. Ungovernability was pursued. Young people who took up arms and shed blood were called "a new breed of young lions, with iron in their souls".

The message that was sent to our young people was that liberation was more important than education, and education could wait until after apartheid fell. I knew this was not true. I knew that education was indeed a tool with which we could gain our liberation from ignorance, inferiority and social oppression. Our dignity was not dependent on crushing those who were called our enemies. I believed then, as I do now, that no one is an enemy to be defeated or destroyed. We are equally human beings, though we may think in a right or wrong way and may act in a right or wrong manner. Our true dignity was dependent on our realising that the moral high ground belonged to us, who were oppressed, and that so long as we maintained the high ground, apartheid could not be sustained. Therefore, I pursued education as a means of teaching our young people not only what it means to be a dignified human being, but how to live by one's own labour and ingenuity.

Sadly, the thousands upon thousands of young people who turned to violence and lawlessness are now the very same generation which is unemployable for lack of skills and knowledge. These are the same people who have had guns taken from their hands by the triumph of history, and now find nothing to keep their hands occupied. Together with our poorest communities in this Province, in the midst of the chaos, I fostered self-help and self-reliance and encouraged our people to raise funds to build schools and secure teachers. I rallied under the banner of "Education for liberation". My vision was to see a liberated South Africa in which our people were already well-equipped to embrace the new opportunities which would open for us. I wanted our young people to be able to become a productive work-force from day one of our political liberation. I wanted young leaders who could take our new country from the ashes of apartheid towards a future we could be proud of. I wanted ordinary

people to be capable of operating as competent citizens in a country vastly changed, widely opened and ready for business.

I believe that there were men and women who shared my long-term vision for a new South Africa throughout the days of our liberation struggle. Among these was Mack Omega Shange, who worked side by side with my KwaZulu Government to train and equip our young people with the skills and character of good citizens. Mack Omega Shange worked through the Scouts Movement, recognising in it the foundation of good values, an excellent curricula and sound principles for human development. I am proud to say that he saw in Sir Baden-Powell's Movement the roots of what Sir Baden-Powell himself saw in Africa, which is a tradition of Ubuntu Botho whereby we each are responsible for one another. Today, this principle stands. In our present context it is evident that we will either stand united, or together we will fall. With a handful of morally upright, capable young people of goodwill, we can influence entire communities towards solidarity. Changing a country begins with changing individual hearts and minds. As we shape the character of young people, we are securing a future transformation of South Africa towards hope, productivity, social discipline and the precedence of the rule of law.

During the lifetime of Mack Omega Shange, the challenge was to keep our young people from blindly following the call to arms and violence in reaction to the prevailing social evil of oppression. It was not easy to keep our children on the path of discipline, when many powerful people were calling for lawlessness and chaos. It was no easy task to instill in our young people the ability to see beyond the present times, when the present times were so vivid in their injustice and so immediately experienced by us all. Yet I was determined to enable our youth to believe in something greater than the tragedy we suffered together. I wanted them to believe in their own ability to change their world through positive actions, by applying knowledge, with skill and creativity. I wanted to change our communities internally, teaching them to depend on their own efforts and collective strength. Considering the circumstances, I knew this task would be extremely difficult. Yet time and time again, I saw the tangible results of practical goodwill.

Not only did we build schools, but we built the value of education into the fabric of our communities. Today many of our communities in KwaZulu Natal are able to embrace projects of sustainable development simply because of their background of self-help and self-reliance. We know how to provide for our own families, to secure food, to live successfully within the law and to strengthen our own hand by joining hands with those around us. The long-term consequences of what I worked to gain for so many years during our struggle, are well worth the battle. I know that now, as we look ahead again to the future ten or fifteen years from today, we again need to be committed to making the long-term investments required to secure prosperity, stability and strength in South Africa. I believe that our commitment must again, unwaveringly, be focused on education, and again, without fail, we need to look at how our young generation is developing and guide them on a course towards morality, good character, leadership, teamwork, integrity, discipline and goodwill.

Today the battle is waged in a different context. As young people, you are undoubtedly fully aware of the new social evils which threaten to curtail the fulfillment of your human potential. Among these are drug and substance abuse, gang sub-cultures, alcoholism, the threat of HIV/AIDS, racial hatred, criminality and apathy. Our present world is wide open and there are a multiplicity of messages being aimed at young people. Even the campaign of information to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS among our youth is setting itself up as an authority on moral behaviour, acclimatising our youth to the new standards of a vastly opened world. As young people, each of you here knows how difficult it is to find a solid base on which to build your own frame of reference, particularly one that withstands any set of circumstances, no matter

how varied. Relative truth is becoming increasingly accepted, because an unequivocal, unchanging foundation on which to base what we believe in, is becoming hard to find.

I wish to put out a challenge to our Scouts here today. The foundational principles of Scouting are discovery and respect. Scouting develops a respect for our natural environment, for other people and for ourselves. Starting from this foundation, I challenge each of you to seek out an unshakeable set of basic beliefs on which you may base your future decisions, actions and way of thinking. This is the route of any scientist or discoverer. There must be some basic incontrovertible fact that you can accept as being true. Once you find that, you can begin to lead a life that is consistent and gives evidence of integrity, deliberate action and purpose. These are also the characteristics of a leader, and I believe they should be evident in the example of every scout. I appreciate that scouting teaches the values of generosity, helpfulness, practical hard work and leadership. The training you receive as a Scout is indeed training for life.

What you learn as a Scout will stand you in good stead to face the challenges of adult life. Since Sir Baden-Powell established the Scout Movement at the beginning of the last century, however, much about our world has changed. We can still apply the need for integrity and teamwork to our present context. We can still apply the value of a good attitude, honesty, diligence, discipline and goodwill. These principles are not outdated. But I believe the Scout Movement must remain relevant to the present day, and that it must equip young people to operate in a modern world with the same success, fulfillment and benefit experienced by Scouts in years past. In order to do this, we must acknowledge the quickly diminishing period between childhood and adulthood, and teach our young people not simply to respect authority, but to seek out an authority they can respect. In this way, we will teach a new generation to take ownership of our country, to demand a government of integrity and competence, to insist on proper training and education, to hold all leadership accountable and to pursue their own greatest potential.

I am convinced that our young South Africans are a generation able to effect change. I believe that as Scouts, this group of young people before me is equipped to make good decisions and perform actions which will change our present circumstances for the best. By choosing against drugs and alcohol, you are choosing a fuller life. By choosing to act responsibly when it comes to matters of intimacy and relationships, you are choosing to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS. By choosing to reject criminality, you are choosing justice for our society. By choosing to find an authority you can respect and seeking a foundation of firmly held beliefs on which to base your own life, you are choosing to become good citizens and excellent leaders. Your personal decisions will have a profound effect on the future of South Africa. I believe Sir Baden-Powell was correct in thinking that we can change humanity for the better by shaping a generation of young people as thinkers, workers, and leaders of integrity.

Today, I wish to congratulate each Scout present for committing to develop excellence within your own character. I also take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the leaders in education and culture, to the Chief Scout, the Provincial, Regional and National Commissioners, and the parents of these outstanding young people. Together, we are fulfilling the vision of Sir Robert Baden-Powell and carrying forward the work of Mack Omega Shange. Together we are securing a future in which our posterity are leaders of progress, not followers of the haphazard winds of ideological change. Our young people will create their own future. You will determine whether dignity becomes the full property of every man. You will decide how prosperous South Africa will be. You will write our future history. I am encouraged that tomorrow lies in the hands of young people such as yourselves. May you rise to the challenge of shaping it.