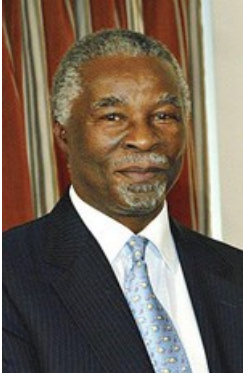


Africans urged to support Mlambo-Ngcuka in her new role

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the new head of UN Women, needs the support of all Africans to succeed in her new role, says former President Thabo Mbeki.



(Image: Wikimedia Commons)

"She needs our support, not just the support of governments but we the people should be behind her in every step. She may not succeed without proper support," said Mbeki.

He was speaking in Johannesburg on Friday night at a congratulatory dinner held for Mlambo-Ngcuka following her appointment to the United Nations body tasked with promoting women's rights and their full participation in global affairs.

In 2005, Mbeki appointed Mlambo-Ngcuka as the first female deputy president in South Africa and before that the two had served together in government since 1996.

Apart from Mbeki and his spouse Zanele, others who attended the dinner included Speaker of the National Assembly Max Sisulu, Home Affairs Minister Naledi Pandor, Women, Children and People with Disabilities Minister Lulu Xingwana, former IEC chairperson Brigalia Bam and head of the National Gambling Board, Baby Tyawa.

Mbeki said: "You can never talk about the issue of a better world without addressing the issue of gender balance. When you look at this job, and you look at what is expected from the person and the kind of things the person has to do, you might get scared but we are quite certain that with all the support she will [succeed]."

He added that Mlambo-Ngcuka was committed to serving the people and had always been attached to high principles.

Bam said the women of the world were in luck to be led by Mlambo-Ngcuka who, she said, will drive the gender balance and women emancipation agenda to another level.

"Knowing Phumzile, I can say women are very fortunate that she has been appointed in this position. I have known her since she was eight years old," said Bam.

Mlambo-Ngcuka said speeding up the Millennium Development Goals that affect women would be among her top priorities.

She left for the UN Headquarters in New York on Saturday where she will be working from for the next four years. However, her job will include a lot of travelling to different parts of the world, including Africa.

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