Thank You very much for extending an invitation to me, to be part of such a probing and thoughtful discussion.

I say probing and thoughtful because at the core of this discussion, one is required to assess to what extent have we been able to implement and integrate the Sustainable Development Goals in South Africa, and perhaps, more precisely, into our justice system.

In his acclaimed book, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Paulo Freire, argues that, "***As the encounter of women and men seeking to be more fully human, dialogue cannot be carried on in a climate of hopelessness. If the dialoguers expect nothing to come of their efforts, their encounters will be empty and sterile, bureaucratic and tedious.***"

I have no doubt that this discussion is not taking place in a climate of hopelessness. On the contrary, we are now seeing more hope, as a result of the actions of state institutions which ensure that the wheels of justice spare no one.

Everyone who converts the great will of society and abuses public power for their personal benefit, must have their day before the corridors of justice. At times, this may be a long, tedious and bureaucratic process, but it is not a sterile one.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I believe that the state must be a conduit of social justice. In other words, the role of the state, amongst other things, is to deepen equality in our society. Although we as a nation state celebrate 25 years of a constitutional and democratic state, we must be honest, obtaining social justice is still elusive in various communities and spheres of society in general. Politically, equality is afloat but social justice requires a substantial amount of work.

As I am fond of saying, although we may celebrate the fact that we have the greatest constitution in the world, the constitution still requires significant amount of implementation. The constitution must be felt and touched by people in Poffadder,

Thoyandou, and Mqanduli. As a result, Social Justice is that which our fellow South Africans must experience.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Data is said to be the lifeblood of decision-making and the raw material for accountability. In the age of the fourth industrial revolution, analysis of big data is commonplace, with consumer profiling, personalised services, and predictive analysis being used for marketing, advertising and management. Similar techniques could be adopted to gain real-time insights into people's wellbeing and to target aid interventions to vulnerable groups from a government perspective.

According the United Nations, new sources of data - such as satellite data -, new technologies, and new analytical approaches, if applied responsibly, can enable more agile, efficient and evidence-based decision-making and can better measure progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in a way that is both inclusive and fair.

In our context, there is a significant convergence between South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP) and the SDGs. According to an unpublished analysis by the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), 74% of the SDG targets are directly addressed by the NDP, and sectoral programmes address 19% of the remaining targets.

The 2030 Agenda and its SDGs are realised within the context of South Africa's medium- and long- term development planning, which commenced with the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) in 1994. The RDP's overarching aim was to 'mobilise all people and the country's resources toward the final eradication of the results of apartheid by building a 'democratic, non-racial and non- sexist future'. In essence, it was policy designed to usher in social justice.

Underlying the RDP was the notion of 'social transformation', which included redressing apartheid political and economic inequalities through meeting basic needs, poverty eradication, democratisation, redistribution and securing human rights.

According to Stats SA's Living Conditions Survey (LCS), more than one out of every five adults (25.2%) were living below the food poverty line in 2015, while a third (33.8%) were living below the lower-bound poverty line and approximately half (40%) were living below the upper-bound poverty line. A South African's likelihood of being trapped in poverty is to a large extent determined by gender, race and location.

The NDP aims to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030 by reducing the proportion of households with monthly income below R419 per person from 39% to zero and to reduce the Gini coefficient from 0.69 to 0.60. To achieve this, the plan emphasises inclusive economic growth.

The NDP also provides a long-term strategy to increase employment. It identifies a number of sectors through which employment and opportunities can be created. These include education, vocational training and work experience, public employment programmes, health and nutrition, and public transport, among others. To reduce the effects of poverty in the short term, the NDP made a number of proposals.

As you can see Ladies and Gentlemen, at the core of us implementing the NDP and as a consequence the SDGs is government's ability to interpret the data before it. For instance, social security grants based on sections 24 through 29 of the Bill of Rights in the Constitution, recognizes the socioeconomic rights of South African people

It is estimated that 71.9% of elderly people received an old-age pension by 2015, while 92.2% of those classified as poor received social grants. Child support grants were provided to 34.3% of households with children. This is a direct link to poverty reduction as per the SDGs and ultimately the reduction of inequality in our communities.

Data provides an important means for government to not only assess progress but also develop important policy perspectives, for instance, it can be of great use on our mortality rate. One is then able to devise policy to address drinking and driving problems, the accessibility of fire-arms in our communities or even the importance of ensuring that universal health coverage in the form of NHI is a success.

Chair, one of our priorities as this administration is ensure that we review old era legislation, we must ensure that our legislative regime is complaint with our constitutional order.

Given the political orientation and objectives of the apartheid regime, it is conceivable that the some of the legislation we have inherited still has deeply embedded unconstitutional values in them.

Data is like oxygen for policy development and the attainment of social justice in our context. Through Stats SA, we have the means to really analyse, collate and develop the data necessary to drive the necessary change. But one thing is clearer, in the last couple of years in particular, our quest as a nation for social justice has been suffocated by corruption. If we accept that social justice is described "**as the fair and compassionate distribution of the fruits of economic growth",** then we must agree that corruption indeed derailed us.

To prevent this, it is implied that one must enjoy some level of political integrity. Therefore, addressing corruption, is a substantial element of social justice. Because corruption and maladministration is the direct anti-thesis of social justice, it creates victims of theft.

As President Mandela once said, [open quote] **" history from time to time brings to the fore the kind of leaders who seize the moment, who cohere the wishes and aspirations of the oppressed**.[close quote]" But we have also seen that the opposite is true . At times we have seen that sometimes for those who do not have the aspirations of the oppressed occupy critical positions of power.

We South Africans have succeeded quite admirably in putting in place policies, structures, processes and implementation procedures for the transformation and development of our country. We ought to vigorously implement policies, we cannot falter, the future of this great nation is at stake.

I thank you.