

ADDRESS ON BEHALF OF THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO, MR. CHUPU MATHABATHA BY MEC NAMANE MASEMOLA DURING THE PROVINCIAL HERITAGE DAY CELEBRATIONS, HELD AT D'NYALA GAME RESERVE, LEPHALALE.

24 September 2019

Programme Director;
Members of the Executive Council;
Executive Mayor of Waterberg District Municipality, Cllr Morris Mataboge;
Mayor of Lephalale Local Municipality, Cllr Jack Maeko;
All councillors present here today;
Our Director General, Ntate Nape Nchabeleng;
Members of the media;
Invited guests;

THOBELA!

Thank you very much for responding in your multitudes to this important celebration of our national heritage.

This event was scheduled to be addressed by our Premier, Honourable Chupu Mathabatha, however because of other pressing government commitments; he has requested me to represent him in this celebration.

I am happy to be here and celebrate this important day with all of you.

Before I can go any further with my speech, I want to take this opportunity and extend our most heart-felt condolences to the eleven people who lost their lives in an accident between two vehicles on the R-37 road next to the Chuene on Saturday morning..

This is yet another painful tragedy on our roads which has left families devastated and difficult to console.

The painful truth is that most of these accidents are as a result of human factor.

It is possible to radically reduce accidents of this nature on our roads and save the lives of our people.

All we have to do is to stick to the rules of the road. We must ensure that we drive vehicles which are road worthy. We must not overload our vehicles and we must drive within the prescribed speed limit all the time.

As the MEC for Transport and Community Safety, I want to once again take this opportunity to extend words of sympathy and support to all the families which have been affected by this devastating loss.

On a positive note, we want to take this opportunity to once again salute the Ndlovu Youth Choir for their impressive performance at the America's Got Talent in the United States of America.

This youth choir from the dusty streets of Moutse has mesmerised the judges and the audience in America.

These talented youngsters from our Province may not have won the final prize, but to us they are the winners. They have represented us with distinction. We are proud of what they have done for our country –they have really put the name of Limpopo on the international map.

The message we all should be taking home from the achievements of this choir is that, it is not where you come from which will determine your destination –it is your commitment, hard work and focus which will determine your destination in life.

I am sure that you all know that music is an important part of the heritage of the people of Limpopo and a living heritage of the people of South Africa as a whole. In this country, we sing and dance all the time. We sing when we are happy, we sing when we are in celebration and we sing when we are in mourning.

Some use music, song and dance to connect and communicate with our ancestors. Music is a valued part of our heritage.

We want to challenge all the young people who are gathered here, and all the young people of Limpopo to emulate the work ethic of the Ndlovu Youth Choir.

Programme Director;

As a people, we cannot sing and dance when women and children fear to walk the streets of our communities because of abusers and rapists who our rooming our street like wild animals on the loose.

We cannot sing, dance and celebrate when foreigners who are in our country are targeted for criminal activities and treated as if they are not human beings.

The philosophy of Botho or Ubuntu is also part of our proud heritage as the people of the African continent.

The spirit of ubuntu reminds us that motho ke motho ka batho.

This means that you cannot claim your own humanity if you don't respect the humanity of others.

The abuse of women and children in this country had reached unacceptable levels.

The worst of these crimes is when children are abused and killed by the very same people who gave birth to them.

We are tired of reading horrific stories about the abuse of children. Children deserve our protection, love and care, not abuse, rape and mutilation.

It is also against our ethos and values as Africans to abuse and rape women.

We have adopted a no-tolerance attitude against the abuse of women and children.

Our police are prioritising cases of abuse against woman and children.

They have a strict mandate to be swift and uncompromising when dealing with cases of abuse, including gender-based violence.

We can't claim to be a functioning democracy when the majority of our population are denied the basic right such as the right to freedom of movement and the right to bodily integrity.

We call on all victims of abuse to report any such incidents to the police. Do not wait until it is too late.

Experience has proved that abusers do not stop until they are stopped. Do not wait until it is too late.

As the government of Limpopo, we want to commend our residents for having rejected the temptation to participate in the violence that had engulfed our country in the past few weeks.

I speak here particularly about the violence against foreign nationals residing in our country.

We want to salute you for leading by example.

As Limpopo we have mastered the art of living side-by-side with those who have visited our country.

Limpopo is one of the most cosmopolitan provinces of our country.

This area of Lephalale is a home to so many Batswana from Botswana, Towns and cities such as Polokwane, Makhado and Musina have become comfortable homes for our fellow country men and women from Zimbabwe.

In Phalaborwa and Giyani we share the same meals and everything with our brothers and sisters from Mozambique.

We share with them because they are a part of us.

However, those who come to our country to pursue criminal activities must be met with the full might of the law.

We want to say it without any equivocation that Limpopo will never be a home for criminal syndicate who pushes drugs, force women into prostitution and engage in human trafficking.

We will also not tolerate any behaviour from anyone that undermines the growth of our economy.

We will flush-out fake and counterfeit goods from our streets.

We continue to wage a relentless war against drugs and drug dealers. It does not matter what a person's nationality is, those who do crime will never be comfortable in Limpopo.

We will deal with them harshly just like the way a bull-dog deals with the bone.

We know that there are those who cry xenophobia as a tactic to mask their criminal activities –they will not succeed in Limpopo.

Programme Director;

Heritage day also give us an opportunity to celebrate our heroes who are our kings and chiefs.

We celebrate leaders such as Kgoshigolo Sekhukhune; King Makhado Ramabulana, Kgoshi Ratshatsha Malebogo; the Rain Queen Modjadji, Hosi Ngungunyane, and to all our ancestors.

The one thing common about these leaders is that they fought for our land.

They knew that the land is the biggest and the most important heritage for all of us.

They fought to defend the land against foreign invaders because they knew the value of the land.

They knew that without land they would be nothing and their children and the children of their children will be condemned to a life of poverty and squalor.

They knew that without land they would not be able to produce food for their families.

Without land they would not be able to build houses for their family.
They knew that their land was their dignity.

They also knew that the land was the most important heritage they would be able to pass from one generation to the other.

It is therefore correct to say that the most important and common heritage of the people of South Africa is the land.

Those who took away the land from the African majority did not only strip Africans of their identity, they also stole our heritage.

The land is our heritage, the land is our inheritance.

It is for this reason that the struggle for the return of the equitable redistribution of the land is a call that must be supported by all South Africans.

We can only fully celebrate a common heritage, when we all have an equal share in the inheritance of the land.

Today we are therefore saying that the struggle for the return of the land to the disposed Black majority is a befitting tribute to the legacy of forefathers who fought and died in defence of the land.

Programme Director;

Today is a day of celebration.

Today is about spoiling ourselves to the melodic tshikona music of the VhaVenda people;

Today is about the spectacular dance moves of xibelani and makhwaya of the VhaTsonga people

Today is about singing and dancing to the tunes of Kiba and mmapadi of the Pedi people.

Today we feast our eyes to the colourful attire of the Ndebele people of this province.

Part of our heritage also includes the attractive display of both the English and Afrikaans traditional parades.

I want to conclude by wishing all of you a happy and productive National Heritage

Day.

I thank you!