

**ADDRESS BY THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO, AMBASSADOR
CHUPU MATHABATHA ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH
OF THE BOOK, KING MAKHADO RAMABULANA, THE LION
OF THE NORTH BY MPHAYA NEMUDZIVHADI.**

17 March 2017

Programme director;

Thovhele Khosi Vho Toni Mphephu Ramabulana;

Representatives of the Modjadji Royal House;

Our host, Vho Mphaya Nemudzivhadi;

Members of the Executive Council;

Executive Mayor, Cllr, Florence Radzilani;

Mahosi

Members of the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Ndaa, khakhaumela, Mahosi a Shango.

It gives me great pleasure to be with you here today as we mark the launch of this very important book; King Makhado Ramabulana – the Lion of the North.

I want to start off by commending our host and author of the book, Vho-Nemudzivhadi for a job well done.

Your work has without doubt loaded our arsenal of heritage and culture.

As we have always said during the days of uMkhondo we Sizwe that ‘our struggle is also a struggle against a memory of forgetting’.

An African proverb says ***“Until the Story of the hunt is told by the Lion, the tale of the hunt will always glorify the hunter”***.

As you know, for many decades, African man has been the hunted in the country of his birth. His true story was deliberately wiped-out from the books of history by those who had the pen in their hands.

In those rare instances where the story of an African was told it was told with deliberate omissions and distortions.

The story of an African was told in such a manner that undermined the talents and heroism of the African people.

For many years, ours has been the story of the hunter and the hunted.

This book will indeed refresh memories yet at the same time providing valued lessons for the future.

This book, will, without doubt, fill-in the missing pages in our national memory.

Programme Director;

Of course this is not the first book to be written about the proud Vhavenda Nation. What we will continue to call for is for many books of this nature to be written.

We want more books about King Makhado, about King Sekhukhune, about Queen Modjadji and many of our heroic icons.

It is only through research, reading and writing that the story of an African can be told from an honest perspective.

Thanks to this book, today we know that Vhavenda people co-existed with the many tribes that formed the then Transvaal, although they themselves did not recognize the borders created by colonists of the time.

As the book confirms, amongst the tribes of the time, includes the Tsonga people, the Batlokwa, Bahananwa and the Basotho of

Moloto. These co-existed even before the Boers arrived in what is today known as Limpopo.

Indeed we are proud of ourselves, we are proud of warrior leaders like King Makhado Ramabulana well known as ***Tshilwavhusi tsha ha Ramabulana or the Lion of the North.***

What strikes me about the book in particular is the fact this is a well researched material – it is not a cut-and-paste of some on-line articles from questionable sources.

In this book you will realize the rich annotation of the people interviewed some of them eyewitnesses who not only saw, but were role players with King Makhado himself.

This book will confirm the truth that the history of King Makhado is the story about struggle, bravery, mystery and conquest.

Through this book we now know the historical relations between the Queen Modjadji dynasty and the Vhavenda. We now can relate how one of the sons of King Makhado ended in Botlokwa and his relationships with Batlokwa ba Mamokotopi.

These and other historical facts would have disappeared into the dustbin of history if we did not have scholars like Dr Nemudzivhadi and many others writing them down for our enrichment.

Programme Director;

I would not have done justice if I did not express my appreciation to His Majesty, King Toni Mphephu Ramabulana for his continuous support for initiatives such as this one.

I talk of initiatives that are aimed at restoring our rich culture and traditions.

We thank you **Thovhele** for always doing your best to keep the rich cultural heritage of the Vhavenda people in particular in the memories of our younger generation.

We thank you **Thovhele** for guiding all of us to not take the rich knowledge about our history, culture and traditions to our graves.

Programme Director;

As we launch this book which forms part of our rich cultural heritage, the question that we should all ask ourselves is whether we are doing enough to take our younger generation along with us.

Do our youth understand the significance of preserving our cultural heritage?

I doubt if the importance of the work we are celebrating today is deep-rooted in the minds of our youthful population.

With your permission **Mr. Programme director**, I would like to focus my attention now on the significance of a day such as this for our youth.

To drive my point home, allow me to quote President Zuma when he said that:

“As South Africans from all walks of life, regardless of the role we played in history or what we believed in then, have a responsibility to respect and acknowledge the past, celebrate the present and build the future together”

I am in full agreement with the president because it is only through the study and acknowledgement of the past that our children will understand who they are and what the future holds for them.

The Black pride ideas of Makhado, Sekhukhune, Ngungunyane and many others should and must resonate within our youth.

Our cultural heritage is the biggest inheritance we can ever leave for our children.

If we do not teach this history, someone from somewhere will come and teach it for us. He will teach it from his own point of view to serve his own interest.

It is troubling to see young people turning their back on their past.

Most of us prefer to define ourselves in terms of where we are going and forget everything about where we come from. Perhaps we should take serious the calls that history be made a compulsory learning area for our children at school.

Our point of departure is that no matter how many degrees one may have, you remain illiterate if you do not know your own history. If you do not know where you come from.

Programme Director;

If we are not careful, or if we do not act on these concerns we will lose our identity, and the struggles of heroes such as Makhado would have been betrayed.

If we are not careful our indigenous names will disappear and all our children will bear foreign names.

Our languages are facing a real possibility of extinction; very soon, if we do not act swiftly, we will have no young person speaking Tshivenda, Sepedi or Xitsonga. This is so because we are all excited to take our children to those schools that do not teach our indigenous language and we think that is cool.

It can never be cool for a child to lose his or her identity; it is actually a tragedy of unimaginable proportions.

We should be reminded today of the urgency to reject this wholesale importation of foreign cultures and traditions.

King Makhado struggled so that we can embrace without shame our God-given dark complexion, he did not struggle so that our children can paint themselves with so-called skin lighteners, as if they wish to escape from their Black skin.

From his life our children should be able to understand that it is actually cool to speak your own language or to speak English with your deep Tshivenda accent.

Our colorful traditional attire should instill a sense of pride in us – sadly, we only put them on once a year during the National Heritage Day.

We have even forgotten the rich sound of our traditional music because of the domination of foreign sounds on our airwaves.

We suffer from preventable diseases because we have abandoned easily accessible and healthy traditional food.

Programme Director;

MEC Moloji is here; during the State of the Province Address I announced that we would be commencing the process to construct a multi-million performance theatre in Polokwane.

Our specific instructions are that that theatre should showcase the stories of our own people.

We always complain when some foreigners write films about our icons. We always say that the characters have not been portrayed properly or the story itself is misleading.

It is now time to tell our own story; the story about our own icons. Let us refuse to be the hunted. Let us be the narrators of our own stories.

I therefore challenge everyone here to ensure that a film about Makhado graces our cinemas very soon.

I am sure that MEC Moloï and her team will be willing to provide necessary support and infrastructure for such a project.

This is an opportunity that we must not miss; otherwise someone out of this province or even out of this continent will come and tell us about King Makhado in a way of a film, and Khosikhulu, you are not going to like it.

Once again, thank you very much for your generous invitation. I wish this book all of the best in the market.

I am sure that necessary arrangements will be made to ensure that the book is found in our libraries including at our universities.

Thank you Vho-Nemudzivhadi for a job well done.

Ria livhuwa.

Tshiulu tsha madini,maringa dzi ndevhelaho...

Ndaa