

ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR TREASURY SEAPARO SEKOATI ON BEHALF OF PREMIER OF LIMPOPO, MR. CHUPU MATHABATHA DURING THE PROVINCIAL HERITAGE DAY CELEBRATIONS, HELD AT LETABA.

24 September 2022

Programme Director, MEC Thandi Moraka;
Representatives from Modjadji Royal House;
Members of the Executive Council present;
Speaker of the provincial Legislature, Mme Molapo;
Members of our Provincial Legislature,
Your Worship Executive Mayor, Cllr Pule Shai,
Our host Mayor, Cllr Dagmar Mamanyoga;
Leadership of SALGA and all Councillors here;
Leadership of the provincial House of Traditional Leaders and all Esteemed
Traditional Leaders present here today;
Members of all NGOs present here;
Members of the media;
Distinguished Guests;
The people of Limpopo:
Avuxeni! Thobela! Good day! Goeie dag!

Thank you for coming in such huge numbers to celebrate our National Heritage Day. You all look so beautiful in your different traditional attires.

Today the rich heritage of Limpopo's diversity is on display.

This region of Mopani is itself an epicentre of Limpopo's cultural diversity.

This sub-region of Letaba is equally a beautiful home to the beautiful KheLobedu language.

KheLobedu is a language that should be promoted, protected, and preserved.

This language is part of the heritage of this province. The significance of KheLobedu language reaches far beyond the boundaries of Greater Letaba Municipality.

I always look forward to our Heritage Day celebrations because of their splendour and extravagance.

On this day, be assured of a beautiful blend of colour, song and dance.

You can be assured of great entertainment in a form of tshikona music of the VhaVenda people,

When you are in Limpopo, you can be assured of spectacular dance moves of xibelani and makhwaya of the VhaTsonga people

You will also be entertained by the impressive dance and tunes of Kiba and mmapadi of the Pedi people.

You will feast your eyes to the beauty of the colourful attire of the Ndebele people of this province.

Our menu will be incomplete without the attractive display of both the English and Afrikaans traditional parades.

This is what makes us the great Limpopo. This is part of our cultural heritage. It is a great source of our pride and our unique cultural identity.

Your Homeboy, none other than Master KG put it very well when he said, 'ge o nyaka o dwa o dhefa, namela o tle Limpopo'

Programme Director

September marks the annual Heritage Month in South Africa, and it is used to celebrate and promote our rich cultural heritage.

The democratic government has dedicated this month to recognise our heritage, both tangible and intangible.

When we speak of our tangible heritage we refer to buildings, historic places, artefacts and monuments.

When we speak about our intangible heritage we speak of inheritances such as language and knowledge. These are the treasures that have been bequeathed to us by the past generations.

Part of our heritage celebrations is to honour and celebrate our living human treasures and legends who have made an immense contribution to the arts, culture, and heritage landscape.

These are the custodians of our indigenous knowledge.

Programme Director

Limpopo is one of the richest provinces when it comes to the diversity of cultural heritage.

This is a home of a melting pot of diversity of cultures.

You have already seen that whenever we celebrate in this province, we do so in style.

No one can match our unique style which is based on a fusion of different cultures of our people.

On a day such as this it is also important to remind ourselves of the fact that our province is not only a home of rich cultural diversity; our province is also a home of ancient civilisations.

This is the home of the great Mapungubwe, South Africa's first City of Gold that flourished in the 12th century.

As described by UNESCO, Mapungubwe has been a centre of the largest kingdom in the sub-continent before it was abandoned in the 14th century.

This significant world heritage site was home to an advanced culture of people for the time - the ancestors of the Shona people of Zimbabwe who traded with China and India, and had a flourishing agricultural industry.

This is the home province to ancient yet dynamic kingdoms, this is the home of the Kingdom of Thulamela.

This kingdom is situated on the northern part of the internationally renowned Kruger National Park. Thulamela is a hillside of stone ruins which tells a story of ancient culture dating as far back as the 15th century.

This is the home of Makapans Valley, often regarded as a sister to the cradle of humankind. It was at Makapans Valley that that Raymond Dart discovered an Australopithecus fossil in 1936.

This province is also a home of the majestic Makgabeng plateau which neighbours the equally impressive Blouberg Mountains.

As you would know, the Makgabeng plateau is famous for its ancient rock art paintings dating back to the 1st African ancestors to ever inhabit and walk on the African soil.

All these form part of our rich tangible heritage.

You can only find these attractions in Limpopo and nowhere else.

This is a heritage we should know about – a heritage we should promote, and indeed a heritage to be proud of.

Programme Director

Our youth are the most legitimate heirs of this heritage we are talking about.

Young people are the future and the future belongs to our young people.

It is therefore important that our young people are well familiar with their own history so that they can have a proper claim on the future.

Please young people, let's preserve and protect this Heritage with all we can. As the older generation we are worried that our children seem to be turning their back on their past; the very past that forms part of our collective heritage.

It is extremely dangerous for our young people to want to define themselves in terms of where they want to be without wanting any relationship with who they are.

I always say that no matter how many degrees one may have, you remain illiterate if you do not know your own history.

Without this knowledge of history one is just like a tree with dead roots. The future for such a tree is bleak.

This reminds me of the legendary Bob Marley's children who have a song that says; "tomorrow people, where is your past".

It is painful to hear our children despising their own African languages.

Even more painful is listening to our children speaking their own languages with a twang or accent.

The truth is that 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.

Our languages will soon belong to history books.

The saddest thing is that as parents we are actively involved in this tendency to extinct our languages.

We are all excited to take our children to those schools that do not teach our indigenous language.

We confuse good education with speaking English.

It can never be cool for a child to lose his/her identity; this is actually a tragedy which requires our urgent attention and action.

If there is anything we should learn from the lives of icons such as Steve Biko is that it is actually cool to speak your own language or to speak English with your deep Tshivenda or Shangaan accent.

I am therefore happy to see that in this part of our province, you still take your culture and your languages seriously.

Programme Director

I want to say to our youth today that indeed the future belongs to you, but it will be what you make of it.

Everything we do today will determine how our tomorrow will be shaped.

I therefore wish to take this opportunity to urge our young people to turn away from the web of drugs and substance abuse.

There is no better future which is wrapped in nyaope or bottled inside a quart of beer.

Unprotected sex is one of the things that will also deem your otherwise bright future as a young person.

With unprotected sex come sexually transmitted infections, including diseases such as AIDS.

With unprotected sex come unwanted and unplanned pregnancies.

Your future is with you and your books.

The government is doing a lot to ensure that no child is denied education simply because he or she does not have money to pay.

The current government policy is that every student who is financially needy and academically deserving should be assisted to get access to education.

As young people, I challenge you to make use of the opportunities at your disposal. Be a generation that makes education fashionable.

Be part of the movement to defeat teenage pregnancy!

Be part of a movement to defeat nyaope and another forms of substance abuse;

Be part of a generation that promotes sport, art and culture;

Be part of the generation that do not participate in late-night parties and the abuse of alcohol.

The future is yours to embrace. Fight for the future you want. It is in your hands to create a better tomorrow.

Programme Director

Once again, on this important day of commemoration and celebration, I would like to say - let us sing and dance. Let us embrace our culture and heritage and be proud of who we are.

On behalf of our government, I wish you a beautiful and fulfilled National Heritage Day.

Ria livhuwa.

Inkomu!

Ndaa!

Rea leboga!