



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR COGHSTA AT
THE PROVINCIAL HERITAGE DAY CELEBRATIONS,
ZWIGODINI, MUSINA MUNICIPALITY**

24 September 2023

PROGRAMME DIRECTOR, MEC FOR SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE,
MEC NAKEDI SIBANDA-KEKANA

OTHER MECS WHO ARE HERE

HIS WORSHIP THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF VHEMBE DISTRICT
MUNICIPALITY, CLLR NENGUDA

HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR OF MUSINA MUNICIPALITY, CLLR
MAWELA

VHO-THOVHELE TSHIKUNDAMALEMA

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,

FELLOW SOUTH AFRICANS,
NDI MATSHELONI,
NDAA!

I stand before you today filled with immense pride and joy as we gather here to celebrate the 2023 Heritage Day.

It is indeed an honour for me to address you on this momentous day on behalf of our honourable Premier, Chupu Stanely Mathabatha, who despite wanting to be here, could not because of other pressing government commitments.

This month, we come together to honour and appreciate the rich and diverse cultural heritage that defines our beloved nation, South Africa.

We are today here in Vhembe, the land of myths and legends, the place of rich cultural traditions of the people around here. Not so far from us we have a natural wonder, the Big Tree, the one that has embodied many rituals of this place for many years.

It has attracted the attention of international world and attracted tourists to learn a lot from us. We know of the intrigue of Pafula to east of this place in the Kruger National Park. Ancient wonders coming out of that speak of connection between ancestral heritage and present day existence.

Heritage Month serves as a reminder of the invaluable contributions that our cultural heritage makes to our social, economic, health, and scientific well-being, particularly for our rural, township, and peri-urban communities.

It is a time to reflect on the past, embrace the present, and envision a future that is rooted in the strength of our diversity.

As we commemorate Heritage Day today, we have the opportunity to showcase the tapestry of cultures and traditions that make up the fabric of our nation. We see here all sorts of cultural outfit, Tshikona, Tshigombela, Malende, Dinaka, Xibelani and many more. Our heritage is a fusion of African, Asian, and European influences, each contributing to the vibrant mosaic that is South Africa.

This year, the theme for Heritage Month is "Celebrating our cultural diversity in a democratic South Africa." It is a call to recognise and appreciate the beauty of our differences, to celebrate the unique customs, languages, and beliefs that shape our identities.

It is a reminder that our diversity is not a source of division, but rather a source of strength and unity.

Not so long ago, the oppress Apartheid government did not make space for the observation and celebration of the cultures of the majority of South Africa. Together with economic deprivation, this cruel oppressive rule robbed our people of the pride they have in their identity.

This government made the dehumanization of black people a gospel, and put resources and state policies toward making our people forget the treasure they have in their different cultures and traditions.

However, this ANC-led government has made it clear that it will be true to the wishes of the many people who gathered in Kliptown to develop the Freedom Charter in June 1955.

Among many declarations that they made for our people, they said, and I quote "All people shall have equal right to use their own languages, and to develop their own folk culture and customs".

Furthermore, our Preamble to the Constitution states that South Africa ***'belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity'***, while section 1 notes that the founding provisions of our country are ***'human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms'***, reflecting a commitment to ensure that the nation is an inclusive one which places equal value on all customs, traditions and practices.

These important sections stand as undeniable evidence of the commitment our country has to protect our cultural difference.

However, beyond our government's commitment to preserving culture, it is important for us to appreciate the role played by our Traditional Institution made up of our esteemed traditional leaders in protecting the sanctity of our cultures.

We continuously see their unbending commitment in the way they hold their respective cultural celebrations and we recognize the support they give us annually towards holding safe Traditional Initiation Schools.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted to announce that the Heritage Day event on the 24th of September 2023 will be hosted by the eThekweni Metro in KwaZulu-Natal. This will be a momentous occasion where we will come together as a nation to showcase the richness of our cultural heritage, to learn from one another, and to forge stronger bonds of understanding and respect.

In Limpopo, we are blessed with a heritage that is as diverse as our landscapes. From the majestic mountains of the Soutpansberg to the lush valleys of the Limpopo River, our province is home to a tapestry of cultures, languages, and traditions. It is a place where the past and the present coexist, where ancient traditions are preserved and celebrated alongside modern innovations.

As we celebrate our heritage, let us also remember the importance of preserving and promoting our cultural treasures. Our heritage is not just a reflection of our past, but a guide for our future. It is a source of inspiration and pride, a reminder of the resilience and strength of our ancestors.

In conclusion, let us embrace this Heritage Month with open hearts and open minds. Let us celebrate our cultural diversity, not just on the 24th of September, but every day. Let us strive to build a democratic South Africa that cherishes and respects the heritage of all its people.

Thank you, and may this Heritage Day be a joyous celebration of who we are as a nation.

Ahi voneni xibhebalani xi chachula!

Are thuntsheng lerole le banna ba Kiba!

Nanga dza tshikona kadzi mphunge!

Ndaa!