

**MEDIA STATEMENT BY THE MEC RESPONSIBLE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE, MR. RODGERS MONAMA DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION OF THE MEDIA LAUNCH OF THE 18<sup>TH</sup> EDITION OF THE MARULA FESTIVAL 2024 AT UHURU CAFÉ AND LIFESTYLE EMPORIUM, 21 APRIL 2024**

Thank you Programme Director, Mike Taueatsoala  
Executive Mayor of Capricorn District Municipality, Cllr Mamedupi Teffo  
Executive Mayor of Polokwane, Cllr Makoro Mpe  
Mayor of Ba-Phalaborwa Local Municipality, Cllr Merriam Malatji  
Chairperson of the Limpopo Tourism Agency Mr. Andrew Dipela  
Members of the Board of Directors of Limpopo Tourism Agency  
Head of Department for LEDET, Mr. Matodzi Rathumbu  
CEO of Limpopo Tourism Agency, Mr. Moses Ngobeni  
Officials from the department and our entities  
Our esteemed guests, members of the Fourth Estate, the Media  
Our performing artists  
Invited guests, ladies and gentlemen  
Good afternoon, Thobela, Masehari, Avuxeni, Lotshani.

Thank you for honouring our invite to this official launch of the 18<sup>th</sup> edition of the Marula Festival (2024). We are very humbled by your presence, especially the members of the media for putting aside your equally important commitments and engagements to come and grace this event. This media launch would not be successful without your presence because it is through your pen and paper and other audio visual materials that will make this launch known throughout the length and breadth of our country and beyond our borders. Thank you once again.

Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment & Tourism (LEDET) has made a purposeful economic intervention by developing the Limpopo Mukumbi Industries as a viable business industry within the province, taking advantage of the vast concentration of marula trees found mostly in the sub-tropical parts of the province. From this initiative, the annual Marula Festival was born, which has since grown into a provincial flagship brand.

2024 sees the 18<sup>th</sup> edition of the Limpopo Marula Festival which will be hosted from 26 April to 04 May 2024 at various locations around the town of Phalaborwa, culminating in an open-air concert at the Impala Park Stadium. The festival has now become a strong brand with packages to be enjoyed by all age groups as a collective experience.

The 2024 schedule of festivities will cover all activities traditionally associated with the Marula brand to recognize and commercialize the rich heritage of the province through beneficiation, promoting women empowerment, capacity building and enhancement of the arts industry.

The Marula festival aims to use the various activities to drive feet to the event, which results in a critical mass that contributes towards economic growth, drives domestic tourism and enhances local trade that results in the creation of new job opportunities, thereby contributing to poverty alleviation. This is done through blending the festival with other activities other than concentrating only on the Morula beverage. These include SMME empowerment, sporting events (like golf and a marathon) and a music festival that promotes the rich arts and cultural heritage of the province.

The event culminates into conceptual promotion of a series of marula products manufactured by Marula Cooperatives. The festivities also

ensure a grand showcase of exhibits and an array of products that will be sold to the markets.

The main objectives of the annual Limpopo Marula Festival are as follows:

- Use the festival as a draw card to increase domestic, regional and international tourism flow through the promotion of the Marula Festival and its associated festivities.
- Develop a festival package to be enjoyed by all age groups as a collective experience (i.e. blend the music festival with other activities including exhibitions, sports activities, career awareness and cultural and heritage events).
- Facilitate the development of viable economic opportunities for the people of the province through harvesting and processing of the Marula fruit.
- Enhance awareness and usage of the Marula fruit amongst domestic consumers and the business community.
- Create strong partnerships between the beverage brewers, hospitality industry and corporates to enhance marketability of Marula products.
- Create a platform for the development of sustainable businesses out of Marula.
- Increase visitor numbers to the province with huge multiplier effects (in terms of bed nights and spend) within the host venue and province in general.
- Increase the commercial value of the Marula products through the support of the developed Marula Beverage Brewers and producers of the bi-products.
- Increase business networks and partnerships.

- Enhance promotion of the province with the Limpopo Marula Festival being showcased as an authentic brand that caters for the needs of all age groups and unique to Limpopo.
- Promote economic, cultural and heritage diplomacy through participation of regions of the world with which Limpopo Province has historical ties.

This year, LEDET will collaborate with the Department of Sport, Arts & Culture (DSAC) to host joint district build-up events that will showcase the talent of our local artists, which presents a wonderful opportunity for local artists and cultural groups to display their talent and partake in the festival activities.

In addition, our partnership with the Ba-Phalaborwa Municipality grows each year, with the municipality supporting the cultural parade that signals the commencement of the marula festivities.

Our collaboration with the private sector continues to grow in leaps and bounds, with companies like Palabora Mining Company (PMC) and Foskor hosting the family marathon and golf challenge respectively. These events add onto the social aspect of the marula festival by providing family recreation and sports events for all ages. Many other corporate companies have reached out to the department to participate in these events, and we are in the process of finalizing such agreements. Some of these include Old Mutual, Metropolitan, Toyota and Standard bank, just to name a few.

Ladies and gentlemen, the brewing and supply of the morula beverage is a key feature of Marula festival that addresses the economic development

aspect of the event. The Morula beverage is prepared by 60 women that belong to 15 co-operatives from all districts of the province. This year, the department will procure 12 000 litres of the morula beverage that will be made available at all activities that constitute the festival package.

Another key feature of the festival is the SMME Flea Market which provides an opportunity for emerging SMMEs, companies, entrepreneurs and traders to exhibit and sell their products and showcase their brands in a flea market setting to promote their businesses. We are proud to announce that this year, Limpopo Economic Development Agency (LEDA) will support 30 small business owners at this event.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have during the past 18 years witnessed a great entrepreneurial growth within the Marula industry with businesses thriving in the production of Marula Achaar, Marula Jam, Marula Peanut Butter, Marula packaged peanuts, Marula soap, Marula juice and lots of Marula flavoured meals. These are the products motivated by the preservation of our Morula tree and its Marula fruits.

We are hopeful as we strive towards industrialising our province, encouraging Industrial Symbiosis, supporting emerging entrepreneurs and striving towards market access for our local small businesses, we will soon be the leading province with regard to the supply of various Marula products across our country, and hopefully beyond our borders.

Each year we invite international guests as well as possible investors to Ba Phalaborwa Municipality as we celebrate this special tree and its fruit. It is through such efforts that we aim to fast track rural and township

business, as this is key in attaining the much needed thriving rural and township economies.

We are highly pleased by the growth of the Marula based business and the crucial role that it plays in the creation of jobs and creativity with regard to attracting consumers and competing with other market products.

As the department responsible for economic development and tourism in Limpopo Province, we applaud the efforts by the Ba Phalaborwa Municipality, the department itself and the agency responsible for tourism promotion, the Limpopo Tourism Agency. This partnership has proven to be of mammoth importance.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the 2024 Marula festivities include:

<b>Event/Activity</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Venue</b>
District Build Up Events (x 5, covering the 5 districts of the province)		
Capricorn	25 April	Mohodi Sports Ground
Sekhukhune	26 April	Jane Furse Sports Complex
Waterberg	26 April	Mookgopong Community Hall
Vhembe	26 April	Tshivhase Secondary School

<b>Event/Activity</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Venue</b>
Mopani	27 April	Callies Stadium, Sekororo Village
Cultural Parade	26 April	Wildevye Park to Impala Park Stadium
Mayor's Marula Welcome Dinner	26 April	Impala Park Sports Hall
Career Expo	24 to 26 April	Municipal Lapa
SEDA Pop Up Market	26 to 28 April	Eden Square Mall
SMME Flea Market	01 to 04 May	Eden Square Mall
Family Marathon	27 April	PMC to Impala Park Stadium
Theatre & Film Festival	02 May	Namakgale Community Hall
Welcome Dinner	03 May	Borwa Lifestyle Centre
Sponsor's Golf Day	03 May	Ba-Phalaborwa Golf Course
Marula Golf Challenge	04 May	Ba-Phalaborwa Golf Course
Open-Air Concert	04 May	Impala Park Stadium

We invite you to join us in celebrating the 2024 Marula Festival from 26 April to 04 May in Phalaborwa.

Come *"Discover the greatness in Marula"*!

I now invite you to set your eyes on the screens to get a taste of the music festival line-up.

*(NOTES: A video will be played showcasing the agreed upon artist line-up)*

Thank you.