

REMARKS BY THE HONOURABLE PREMIER RM MTSHWENI-TSIPANE ON THE PROVINCIAL COMMEMORATION OF HERITAGE DAY

DATE: 24 SEPTEMBER 2023

VENUE: KAMEELRIVIER, DR JS MOROKA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Programme Director;

Honourable Members of the Executive Council;

**The Executive Mayor of Nkangala District Municipality,
Councillor Thomas Ngwenya;**

**Our host, the Executive Mayor of Dr JS Moroka Local
Municipality, Councillor Nomsa Mtsweni;**

Executive Mayors and Councillors in our midst;

**Members of the Provincial and Local Houses of Traditional
and Khoi San Leaders;**

**Senior government officials of the Provincial Government,
led by the Director General, Mr Makhukhu Mampuru**

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

**REMARKS BY THE HONOURABLE PREMIER RM MTSHWENI-TSIPANE ON THE PROVINCIAL
COMMEMORATION OF HERITAGE DAY**

Lotjani;

1. Programme Director, it is a great privilege for me to join the people of Kameelrivier as we commemorate what defines and unite us as a Province.
2. On this auspicious day, we celebrate the rich and diverse cultural and traditional heritage that have been passed down to us by ***abo Gogo nabo Mkhulu***.
3. It is on this day that we celebrate our cultural and our living heritage, as expressed in our traditions, rituals, and indigenous knowledge systems.
4. It is fitting, programme director, that we gather here to celebrate heritage day under the theme: ***“Celebrating our cultural diversity in a democratic South Africa”***.
5. One of the distinct features of our beautiful Province is our unity in cultural diversity, reflected by the various cultural groups in attendance today.
6. This celebration today is crucial to remind all of us, that we are united in diversity as a Province.

7. This area where we are, is dominated by AmaNdebele, who are fully represented in their colourful attire and rich in IsiNdebele language. I also noted baPedi, in their unique attire, with a display of traditional dance.
8. I also noticed amaSwati, in their traditional attire, and heard them proudly conversing in their rich SiSwati language. We also have the Tsongas, in their colourful attires, with my favourite '**Xhibelane**', as well.
9. All these different groups are spread across the 3 Districts in Nkangala, Ehlanzeni and Gert Sibande. This is who we are.
10. Programme Director, we are so privileged as a Province to mark this celebration with **AboNdabezitha** in our midst. Their steadfast fight against colonialism and apartheid in the history of this country, to preserve our customs and traditions, has contributed immensely to the celebration of this day.
11. This is part of the reason why this government continues to work with *aboNdabezitha* in many areas, including the delivery of services, to our people.

12. Recently, the Chairperson of the Mpumalanga Provincial House of Traditional and Khoi San Leaders, Kgoshi Mokoena, raised a concern about the poverty state of communities who live within the vicinity of the mines, when he was addressing the Emakhosi Indaba.
13. I wish to indicate to Kgoshi Mokoena and the entire leadership that your concern is not in vain. This is a matter we will explore as government, in an attempt to find a solution.
14. These include tourism sites, which are surrounded by communities in rural areas.
15. Programme Director, as we commemorate heritage day, we do so, acutely aware of the myriad of challenges the people of this beautiful Province are confronted with.
16. The triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment continue to impact us negatively, due to our struggling economy, which causes a shrink in the number of job opportunities.
17. ***Njengaloku sesichubekela embili, uHulumeni wase Mpumalanga, usebenza ngokuzimisela ukuvula amathuba emisebenzi, nokwenza imphilo encono,***

ngohlelo le-Mpumalanga Economic Reconstruction and Recovery plan.

15. Izinhlelo ezifana ne-Expanded Public Works Programme, the Fortune 40 programme, Zonda Insila Programme ne-***Phezukomkhono Mlimi*** programme, zihlelelwe ukuvula lawo mathuba, ukuze abantu baxoshe ikati eziko.
16. We have also developed an initiative to provide funding and operational support to youth led enterprises.
17. The ***Premier's Youth Development Fund***, is informed by our responsibility to address sustainable development that will ultimately reduce the unacceptably high youth unemployment rate.
18. We have begun to see the results of our investment in young people.
19. For example, Lungile Mkhize from Siyabuswa has benefitted significantly from the Premier's Youth Development Fund. ***uLungile Mkhize, uthengisa amaqanda ezinkukhu. Kusihlabe umqhele ukubona umsebenzi wezandla zakhe. Lemali ayithole kule-Youth Fund, uzoyisebenzisa ukubeka ibhizinisi lakhe ezingeni***

lokukhichiza amaqanda amaningi, futhi andize namathuba amaningi emisebenzi.

20. Kuyasijabulisa loko. Sifuna ukubona bonkhe abantu abasha eMpumalanga basizakala ngalena ndlela. Siyazi njalo ukuthi nalapha eNkomazi bakhona abasizakele. Ukhona eMagogeni naseBhevula, abaqhaswe yilemali ye-Youth Fund.

21. Through these programmes, we are resolute to create 90 000 job opportunities by end of this financial year, in response to the myriad of challenges I alluded to earlier.

22. As a matter of fact, our drive to accelerate the development of our heritage driven tourism, is well on track.

23. This is why we have taken the decision to build an education centre, geo-sites and geo-trails at the ***Barberton Makhonjwa Mountain World Heritage Site.***

24. Programme Director, research shows that culture and cultural heritage in particular, can play an important role in ensuring inclusive and cohesive societies.

25. Therefore as we embark on preserving our unique identity, we must use our unique cultural heritage to tackle societal challenges from new angles.
26. Our culture and our heritage strengthen local identities and shape the Province that we envision.
27. We must work with AboNdabezitha across the Province in order to define our moral compass.
28. For example, we must intensify the war on gender based violence. We can only win it, if we are able to isolate the perpetrators and drive home the message that our communities will no longer tolerate the scourge.
29. Programme director, as we confront societal ills, we must find within our diversity, dominant values and ethos that binds communities together and ensure social cohesion.
30. We can do this by emphasizing and affirming the importance of ***Ubuntu***. Ubuntu manifests itself in different forms across racial groups. It is evident in the centrality the Afrikaner community place on solidarity and the church.

31. Ubuntu is evident in the Indian communities through the strong family and community structures to ensure unity and solidarity.
32. Ubuntu manifests itself in traditionally African landscapes through the adage aptly captured by the saying ***“umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu.”***
33. The common denominator in these examples is the centrality and importance of unity in purpose and empathy.
34. As we celebrate heritage day, let us be mindful of our responsibility to promote Ubuntu as an inalienable value-system that our moral regeneration is premised upon.
35. As I conclude Programme Director, allow me to request everyone here today and across the Province to introspect and ask themselves whether they are doing their part in preserving their rich heritage.
36. Ask yourselves if your conduct will allow your descendants to inherit the richness of your heritage in light of the cosmopolitan life we lead today.

37. May we all celebrate, with relentless pride, the regal nature of our cultures, customs and traditions. May we afford the same level of respect to other cultures and traditions.

38. I urge the people of Mpumalanga to continue to define unity in purpose, unity in diversity and to give practical meaning to the term rainbow nation.

I thank you all.