

**WELCOMING REMARKS BY THE PREMIER OF
MPUMALANGA, HON. MANDLA NDLOVU, AT THE 40TH
ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION OF THE MBUZINI
PLANE CRASH TRAGEDY 19 October 2026**

Programme Directors, Deputy Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture, honourable **Peace Mabe** and Mozambican Secretary of State for Arts and Culture, honourable **Matilda Mouche**,

His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Mozambique, honourable **Daniel Chapo** and Her Excellency, the first lady **Mrs Gueta Chapo**

Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, honourable Ronald Lamola and your counterpart from Mozambique, Honourable Minister **Maria Manuela dos Santos Lucas**

Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, honourable **Angie Motshekga** and your Mozambican counterpart honourable **Cristavio Chume** and all ministers, deputy ministers from both countries,

Members of the Executive Councils,

Representatives of the diplomatic corps,

Leaders of liberation movements and veterans of our liberation struggle and all political formations,

Chairperson of the National House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders, **Kgosi Seatlholo**,

The chairperson of the Mpumalanga House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders who is also the President of COTRALESA **Kgosi Mokoena**,

And all traditional leaders present here

The Executive Mayor of Ehlanzeni District Municipality, **Cllr Terror Shabangu** and the acting Mayor of Nkomazi Local Municipality, **Cllr Thandeka Makamo**

Business leaders from our province, **Dr Norah Fakude** and **Mr Robert Gumede** and the entire business community

Senior Officials of both governments led by the Director-Generals that are here

Members of the Machel family led by **Mama Graca Machel** and families of all those who lost their lives in this tragedy,

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning, Bom dia, como vai voce

Good afternoon, boa tarde

1. It is a profound honour to welcome you to the beautiful Province of Mpumalanga, the Province that works for its people, and specifically to Mbuzini, Samora Machel Monument and Museum.
2. A place of immense historical significance to the people of South Africa, Mozambique and the entire Southern African Development Community.
3. We commend the people of Mbuzini, under the stewardship of Inkosi Mlambo III, who continue to carry the emotional scars of this tragic crash. We pay tribute to the elders who courageously ran up these dark slopes, defying aggressive security forces, driven by nothing but their humanity and compassion, to comfort the dying and search for survivors.
4. In an equally remarkable act of generosity, they donated this land to our government, to build this monument in honour of the late President Samora Machel and those who perished alongside him.

5. Their actions ensured that this sacred place would forever stand as a symbol of remembrance, humanity and the enduring bonds between our people and the people of Mozambique.
6. The presence of this monument and museum serves as a powerful reminder that our history must never be forgotten. It is our collective responsibility to preserve this precious heritage, protect its integrity and pass on its significance to future generations.
7. We must ensure that our young people understand that the freedom we enjoy today did not come freely, but was secured through immense sacrifice, courage and the loss of precious lives.
8. Mbuzini connects our province to the broader history of the African continent and to the enduring struggle for dignity, justice and self-determination.
9. The significance of this heritage site is reflected in the approximately 6,800 visitors it receives every month,

demonstrating its importance as a place of remembrance, learning and reflection for both present and future generations.

10. We also extend our sincere gratitude to the provincial and national governments for their significant investment in the development and enhancement of this memorial site ensuring that the legacy of President Samora Machel endures for generations to come.

11. We gather here today to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the tragic plane crash that claimed the life of President Samora Machel, the first President of an independent Mozambique, together with 34 other passengers on this day, 40 years ago.

12. On behalf of the Mpumalanga Provincial Government and its people, I extend a warm welcome to all our distinguished guests, particularly our brothers and sisters from the Republic of Mozambique.

13. Your presence here today is a powerful testament to the enduring bonds of friendship, solidarity and cooperation between our two sister countries, South Africa and Mozambique
14. Forty years have passed since that tragic day, but the significance of this loss remains deeply felt. We remember President Samora Machel not only as the founding President of Mozambique, but also as a courageous freedom fighter, a visionary leader and a committed champion of the liberation of Southern Africa.
15. His contribution to the struggle against colonialism and oppression extended beyond the borders of his own country. He understood that the freedom of Mozambique is incomplete without the freedom of the people of South Africa and the rest of the continent.
16. At a time when apartheid sought to isolate and suppress those fighting for freedom, Mozambique stood with the liberation movements of Southern Africa, including the African National Congress.

17. Today, as we remember President Machel and the other lives lost, we also honour their families, whose grief and sacrifice have formed part of this history for four decades.

18. This occasion also reminds us of the importance of preserving our heritage as a resource for education, tourism and local economic development.

19. As the great anti-apartheid icon Oliver Tambo once said,
“ Those who have died fought a good fight. They have passed on the torch to us. We dare not let it drop,”

20. The presence of President Chapo and Minister Lamola on behalf of our president, standing as one today proves that the torch of freedom has never extinguished.

21. The best way to honour President Samora Machel and his generation of African leaders, including Oliver Reginald Tambo, Nelson Mandela, Sam Nujoma, Kenneth Kaunda, Robert Mugabe and others, is not only through

the monuments we build in their memory, but also through our commitment to transforming the material conditions of our people today.

22. We must honour their legacy by fighting poverty, creating employment opportunities, improving access to quality education and healthcare, and ensuring that our people live with dignity.

23. Their sacrifices must inspire us to build a continent where freedom translates into meaningful economic opportunities, social justice and a better life for all our people.

24. Let this anniversary renew our vow to enhance the freedom and prosperity of both our republics.

25. On behalf of the government and the warm, hospitable people of Mpumalanga, I officially welcome you all to this historic 40th Anniversary Commemoration.

26. Please extend your stay and take time to experience the majestic beauty of Mpumalanga, the Province of the Rising Sun.

27. Not far from where we are gathered, in Malelane, there is an entrance to the world-renowned Kruger National Park, where you can enjoy unforgettable game drives and experience the thrill of seeing the Big Five in their natural habitat.

28. We also invite you to journey to the magnificent God's Window, where nature unveils breath-taking panoramic views of our beautiful landscapes.

29. Explore the spectacular Blyde River Canyon, the third-largest canyon in the world, marvel at the Three Rondavels, and discover the many hidden treasures that make our province truly exceptional.

30. We look forward to welcoming you again and again to our beautiful Province of Mpumalanga.

31. Thank you, Muito Obrigado.