

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE HONORABLE MAYOR SOBANE MNUKWA DURING THE HERITAGE AND CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS HELD IN KWABHACA ON THE 23<sup>rd</sup> SEPTEMBER 2021.**

Madam Speaker

Executive Committee Members

Chief Whip and Whippery

Councillors

Traditional Leaders

Municipal Manager and Senior Management

Media Houses

Government Official

Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me greet you all in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

During the month of September we celebrate all the men and women who have kept our traditions alive. We celebrate the crafters, the sculptures, the weavers, the musicians, the poets, the writers, the storytellers, the trackers, the healers and most importantly the indigenous languages and cultures within Umzimvubu; **AmaXesibe namaBhaca**.

This years' Heritage Month is celebrated under the theme, "The year of Charlotte Maxeke: Celebrating South Africa's Intangible Cultural Heritage".

**Programme Director;** Heritage celebrations have created a conducive environment for all people to embrace and celebrate what was inherited or bestowed upon us by our descendants. Living heritage plays an important role in promoting cultural diversity, social cohesion, reconciliation, peace and economic development. In every community there are living human treasures who possess a high degree of knowledge, skills and history pertaining to different aspects of diverse living heritage.

**Ladies and Gentlemen;** The demarcation of areas in line with the language and culture was a deliberate move on the part of the apartheid government to manipulate the cultural diversity of our people to oppress and to imprison us mentally into seeing the other grouping as being different, inferior and unimportant. Tribalism was perpetuated, encouraged and legalised.

Despite these limitations, culture was able to overflow boundaries and it was able to influence each other.

The Afrikaans Dialect has benefited from the indigenous African languages whilst some of the indigenous African Languages have also benefited from the Afrikaans language.

**Programme Director;** United in our diversity we share one unique national culture which is a South African Culture. As something that we learn and not born with, a duty is on all of us to ensure that our cultural heritage is sustained protected and embraced.

The celebration of our heritage through the events like this one should just be one of many ways to promote our cultural heritage. We inherited the language, tradition and the ways of living from our ancestors and this placed a huge responsibility on the shoulders of all of us to ensure that the heritage as left for us by our ancestors does not disappear.

**Madoda;** In light of the recent attacks on women and children, we have noted similar patterns of patriarchal superiority. This mischievous idea of male dominance over women has long been confused with ownership over our female counterparts. This probably stems from the transition of boyhood to manhood and the lack thereof to teach young boys how to treat women. Let us desist from subjecting women to fixed functionalities and appreciate them as equal beings of note.

So long as this country's women and children live in fear from violence, we cannot regard ourselves as totally free. So long as women are being harassed, abused, beaten, raped and murdered, we cannot say we are a civilised society. Abusing women is not our tradition, nor is it our custom. It is not, and will never be, our heritage. Throughout the history of this continent, women have built and shaped our societies.

They have ruled kingdoms. They have been highly respected and valued. We must put an end to this terrible shame that is tainting the image of our country. When you oppress a woman, you oppress a nation. When you beat a woman, you beat a nation. We must do away with practices that discriminate against women.

With the same determination, we must stand firm against attempts to disrespect our country's women through crude forms of representation in the media, in advertising and in popular culture.

**Fellow Councillors;** in the wake of COVID-19, and well into the future, it will remain our singular concern. We will recover from this crisis and rebuild our lives and our economy. We will continue to strive to eradicate poverty, inequality and underdevelopment.

We will continue to uphold the rights of all our people to practice their cultures, to speak their languages and practice their traditions.

However this all begins with a single jab. I urge all of you to get vaccinated so that we may all reach herd immunity and resume a normal order of our livelihoods.

With that said, I thank you.