

**KEY NOTE ADDRESS BY MEC FOR COGTA, HON. R.M MTSHWENI  
DURING THE ANNUAL COMMEMORATION OF MJEKEJEKE ANNUAL  
CULTURAL CEREMONY IN WALLMANNSTHAL**

**DATE: 7 MARCH 2015**

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**PROGRAMME DIRECTOR  
HIS MAJESTY, INGWENYAMA MAKHOSOKE II  
CHAIRPERSON OF THE MPUMALANGA HOUSE OF TRADITIONAL  
LEADERS, KGOSI MOKOENA  
MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS  
MAKGOSHI FROM BOTH MPUMALANGA AND LIMPOPO PROVINCES  
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS  
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN  
LOTJANI!**

- 1 Programme Director, we are gathered here today to pay tribute to one of the Kings in the history of our Ndebele nation, King Silamba, who dedicated his life to serve our nation. We join Ingwenyama Makhosoke II and the Ndebele nation in paying tribute to one of the gallant fighters in our history, who dedicated his life and time to protect our nation and our culture.
- 2 Historically, King Silamba whose remains are buried in this area, fought gallantly against Mzilikazi's Matebele forces in 1820 until he (King Silamba) decided to settle in this area for our sake.
- 3 Not only did King Silamba and his forces protected our Ndebele nation, but against colonialism and oppression by the whites who wanted to subject our people to labour in their farms.
- 4 This area, which is now home for his remains, invokes good memories. It serves as a constant remainder that there lay a hero who served his nation selflessly. Programme Director, I am convinced that if King Silamba was still alive, his next battle would be a battle of **a better life for the nation**. I am convinced that he would do battle against the triple effects of poverty in order to improve our socio-economic conditions.

- 5 It is no surprise that his name is mentioned amongst great warriors like King Shaka ka Senzangakhona, King Sekhukhune, King Ngungunyane, King Nyabela, King Godongwane, King Mswati and many more. His wisdom resulted in the protection and the preservation of our history and our cultural heritage which we are proud of today.
- 6 Programme Director, I just shared briefly the history of our nation for the benefit of our young generation. It is important for them to know. However, history writers have a lot of work to do. As long as this history is not documented, I will join a chorus of Ingwenyama and the institution of traditional leadership to make noise about the lack of books related to our rich history.
- 7 Failure to document the history of the Ndebele nation, will result in its distortion. I hope writers are taking note of this!
- 8 Programme Director, as we commemorate King Silamba, it is befitting for me to pay tribute to Ingwenyama (Makhosoke II), a descendent of King Silamba. Your Majesty, I have no doubt that your character is shaped by King Silamba. Your commitment to preserve the Ndebele language cannot go unnoticed. With your wisdom, you realized that isiNdebele, like most African languages, is facing extinction in most Universities in the country.
- 9 We are inspired by your initiative to support students who enroll for the Ndebele language at the University of Venda. We are aware of the challenges in this initiative, however, we believe that it is a step towards the right direction.
- 10 Programme Director, land invasion is a serious problem affecting our province. What makes matters worse is the individuals who allocate stands on land belonging to Amakhosi using their letterheads illegally. We are aware that this is also happening on land belonging to Ingwenyama Makhosoke. As the provincial government, we are working hard to deal with such practice.

- 11 The net is closing in for such people. We have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Amakhosi, Municipalities, represented by the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and the SAPS. This gives us the powers to apprehend them. We urge people with information regarding this matter to provide us, so that we can pursue it.
- 12 Programme Director, the death of initiates remains a matter of serious concern. Initiation schools have become a death knell. This is caused by people who hijack our sacred practice, which is a passage of young boys to manhood. As Kgosi Mokoena calls them, they have turned the schools into ATMs, by cashing in money whilst precious lives are being lost.
- 13 Over the years, cases of this nature have been elusive to deal with. The perpetrators got away with murder or with light sentences, when in fact blood is dripping from their hands.
- 14 And this contributed to the mushrooming of the bogus schools. Our provincial government has adopted a zero-tolerance to deaths in the initiation schools. Our Premier, Hon. D.D Mabuza has signed into law, the Ingoma Act aimed at prosecution of those who fail to comply.
- 15 This law came into effect late last year, and I am happy to announce that from now onwards we will be able to deal with those who fail to comply. In fact, we will not even wait for an incident to take place. The Ingoma Act allows us to clamp down the school if the owner does not comply.
- 16 We appeal to Amakhosi not to issue permissions to individuals to operate the schools, if they do not qualify. We appeal to the parents not to risk the lives of their children by taking them to schools that do not meet the requirements. We appeal to our communities to report people who have permission to operate the schools, even if they do not qualify.

17 With this act, we are waging war in order to save the lives of young boys.

18 Programme Director, today is not a day for long speeches. Let me wish Ingwenyama, all our esteemed Makgoshi gathered here and the nation, a successful commemoration.

**Ngwenyama!**