



**DEPUTY MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**Speech by the Deputy Minister of Tourism Fish Mahlalela on the occasion of the 5th
NAMA Cultural Festival Pella, Namakwa District, Northern Cape Province**

05 October 2019

Program Director
Chairperson of the Heritage Centre, Mr Albert Beukes
The Nama People
Representatives from Namibia and Botswana
Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning

Today marks another milestone in the history of NAMA Cultural Festival. It is the 5th edition of this rich heritage celebrations. It is my pleasure and honour to join you and speak to you on this special occasion.

This heritage event is held as we have just concluded the month long celebrations of heritage month, under the theme: *"Reclaiming, restoring, and celebrating our living heritage*, and the Tourism month, which was themed: *Tourism and Jobs – a better future for all"*

You are celebrating your heritage today with an aim to motivate younger generation under the theme: *"Explore, Learn, Protect and Respect the diverse culture and heritage of our country"*

The messages from all these themes are interlinked and intertwined, in that as the people united in diversity, we seek to reclaim and protect our languages, heritage, culture, traditions and customs in order to build a better future for all.

It is therefore befitting of the Nama people to have chosen this path of motivating the younger generation to explore, learn, protect and respect the diverse culture and heritage not only that of South Africa but our sister neighbouring countries of Namibia, where the Kharas and Hardap Regions are located, and Botswana, where the Kgalagadi region is located.

These are the regions you as the Nama people have sought to build relationships. South Africa has a strong political, economic and cultural relationship with both Namibia and Botswana as part of SADC countries, and we are one people. It is therefore important to strengthen the relationship between the Nama people of South Africa, the Kharas and Hardap regions of Namibia and the Kgalagadi region of Botswana.

This festival is such one platform to celebrate together as one people. I take this opportunity to salute all of you for that.

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It is important to tell our own stories, which have the potential to move our countries forward. Without telling stories of our own cultures and languages, we will not be able to sensitize the young generation to preserve the unique legacy of our forefathers. Former ANC President and stalwart of our Liberation struggle, Comrade Oliver Tambo once said: *“the children of any nation are its future, a country, a movement that does not value its youth and children does not deserve its future”*. Heritage is made up of the practice and traditions that are passed on from parents to children formally or informally.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Heritage is tourism, cultural tourism occurs when people are traveling to experience the places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stories of the natural resources and the people. Namakwa District is such one area rich with cultural tourism and is a home to some of interesting tourism attractions such as Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, Namaqualand Flower Route, Richtersveld, Augrabies Falls National Park, The Big hole, Kimberley Mine Museum, Namaqua National Park, Goegap Nature Reserve.

This tourism potential must be maximised to bring about the economic growth and development of this region, and bring about much needed jobs for the locals.

There are many inconsistencies in the manner that information is provided to visitors and tourists. This ranges from the provision of incorrect or varied information about various historic and cultural sites. To this effect, my department has piloted an initiative for the development of content or narratives for key tourism attractions in the Northern Cape. In collaboration with the South African National Parks [SANParks], it was decided that the site where this pilot initiative will be implemented is Khomani San Cultural Landscape, which is located in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park here in the Northern Cape. The department has also rolled out other tourism initiatives to boost tourism in the Northern Cape, these include tourism safety monitors, Chef and Artisan training, Wine service training, hospitality and food beverage programme. I am quite confident that these initiatives shall reach areas such as Pella in the near future.

The declaration of the 24th September as a national day [holiday] and a day to be celebrated was a clear indication of our country's ability to move closer to each other and embrace the cultural heritage of this country. This was correctly captured in the words of the late former President Mandela when he said: “when our first democratically elected government decided to make heritage one of our national days we did so because we knew that our rich and varied cultural heritage has profound power to help build a new nation.

Heritage month encourages South Africans to come together to celebrate the rich and diversity of our nation. Cultural Heritage has been able to survive the policies of the apartheid regime as it was used as a tool and a means of oppression for the black majority. 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 this limitations, different cultures were able to overflow these boundaries and influence one other. The Afrikaans Dialect has benefited from the indigenous African languages and some of the indigenous African languages also benefited from the Afrikaans language.

Programme Director, we as Africans, have a common heritage that we must endeavour to embrace. We must develop a natural urge to all the languages and cultures around us, to immerse ourselves in the richness of our collective cultural heritage. Nothing is impossible, we can be able to meet each other halfway, whether you speak Khoe-Kwadi, Damara, Oshiwambo, Afrikaans or Setswana.

Fellow Nama people, united in our diversity we share one unique national culture which is an African Culture. As something that we learn and not born with, a duty in on all of us is to ensure that our cultural heritage is sustained, protected and embraced. Celebration of our heritage through the events like this one we are having today should 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 place 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.

Program director as I conclude, I will like to emphasise that culture should however not be used as a stumbling block for national unity and shared prosperity. The current situation in South Africa in which unemployment is still rife, poverty still being a common feature in lives of many of our people and

inequality prevalent in our society indicate to us that we must be united in all our efforts to overcome this challenges irrespective of our cultural background

Although we may speak different languages, practice different beliefs, engage in different cultural practices and tell different stories we are bound together by a common African Heritage".

Let there be heritage!

Let there be tourism!

Let there be rain!

Let there be many more NAMCUFE

I wish you a joyful festival

Thank You