

**ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR SPORT, ARTS &
CULTURE AT THE EVENT OF THE PROVINCIAL
KU LUMA VUKANYI EVENT, MUTI WA
VATSONGA OPEN AIR MUSEUM, MOPANI
DISTRICT.**

12th February 2011

Programme Director

**Members of the Provincial Legislature here
present;**

**The Executive Mayor of Mopani District, Cllr.
Matlou;**

**The Mayor of Ba-Phalaborwa Municipality, Cllr.
Mudunungu;**

Other Mayors present here;

Councillors of the respective municipalities;

Our Esteemed Traditional Leaders;

**Traditional Practitioners;
Members of the Media;
Ladies and Gentlemen;
All protocol observed.**

What an honour and a privilege to be once again be part of these celebrations! The celebration of the unique diversity of our people and our history, which is so richly steeped in cultural traditions! It is humbling to see that this practice and the rituals that go with it, are still supported by the people of Limpopo.

I have observed over the years, how international visitors who come to South African shores, cannot get enough of our cultural practices and rituals.

It is clear that they marvel at the fact that we have managed to preserve our culture and heritage through the centuries and even times of hardship. In fact, it is many an international guest's desire to experience the mystique and marvels of Africa they always hear of.

Programme Director

It is indeed a miracle that today, we still practice our traditions with such passion and flair, that it has the potential of blossoming into something bigger, that will benefit our people on economic level, for years to come. A case in point is the annual Marula Festival, which was born out of this very practice of sampling the first products of Marula and of giving thanks for the riches of the earth, provided to us bountifully.

We therefore will continue to first practice this very important ritual of *ku luma vukanyì* to signal in our activities around Marula. In this way, we will be teaching our children and our visitors alike, that we are proud of our heritage, our ancestry and our culture and that we shall never be ashamed of our practices, nor regard them as backward or irrelevant in today's society.

Programme Director

Allow me to relate a little bit of history around *marula* and the rituals that precede the festivities of the marula season or *ku luma nguba*. The indigenous people of the Limpopo Province have always been very close to the earth.

All the riches of the earth were utilized in everyday life and the marula tree was no different, but in a way unique, in that every part of the tree was used for medicinal reasons, general consumption, preparation and preservation of food, pesticides and even birth control. The leaves, fruit, nuts, bark and even wood of this tree of life, was used by various indigenous groups in different way.

The beverage that is brought forth from the marula fruit, seems to have been key to a lot of traditions. Before the beverage could be consumed, the ancestors were asked to appease the marula season. These rituals are known as "*ku luma vukanyi*" the original festival of the first fruit.

However, the most important lesson we can take from *ku luma vukanyi* and the way it had been practiced by our forebears, is the strong message of social cohesion. This is a time for networking and socializing. This is a time for people of all cultures to get together, talk to each other and learn more about each other, while enjoying the fruits of nature, as our forebears used to do. While we are different in so many ways and yet we are united in our diversity, just like the humble marula fruit can be shaped into many different products.

Programme Director

We still believe that cultural practices such as *ku luma vukanyi* and the Marula Festival can serve in uniting our people.

We are looking forward to a Marula season where all the people of this Province can enjoy this time celebration, while also benefitting from it.

Therefore, this Provincial event will henceforth be taken to all the districts of the Province, in the coming years, so as to allow all our people to join in this unifying practice. While the Mopani District was home to *ku luma vukany*i in the past few years, we will today be doing a draw to determine which District will take up the reins for the 2012 event, in this regard.

We know that wherever we go, our esteemed traditional leaders and traditional practitioners will take the lead in ensuring that *ku luma vukany*i remains a treasured event on Limpopo's calendar of significant traditional festivals.

We implore them to take hands and bring *ku luma vukanyi* within the reach of all the people of Limpopo. We will not rest until all our people feel part and parcel of all these practices that are aimed at taking our nation forward.

In closure, Programme Director, my hope is that 2011 will see another successful Marula Festival and that all our activities will be executed in the spirit of social cohesion and nation building. Beyond the successes of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, there are still many events to get excited about and to give South Africa a platform on the world stage.

I thank you!