

**ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR SPORT, ARTS AND
CULTURE IN LIMPOPO, MS. D.B LETSATSI-DUBA,
AT THE EVENT OF INTERNATIONAL
TRANSLATION DAY CELEBRATIONS AND
LITERARY AWARDS, MATLEREKENG THUSONG
CENTRE, EPHRAIM MOGALE MUNICIPALITY.**

5th October 2012

Programme Director;

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

**The Executive Mayor of Sekhukhune District
Municipality, Cllr. D. Magabe;**

**The Mayor of Ephraim Mogale local municipality,
Cllr. Y. Makola;**

Councillors here present;

Our esteemed traditional leaders;

The Chairperson of PanSALB;

Representatives from Lovelife;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

All protocol observed.

In a country full of diverse cultures and languages, we best understand the term “lost in translation”, when we communicate. Many misunderstandings arise from different languages spoken and differences in interpretation. We especially experience this awkwardness when we travel abroad and realise that there is no true global language and that every nation has its pride and its stubbornness, in ensuring that its language receives priority.

It highlights the significance of days like today, when we take the time to reflect and observe the importance of the use of language but more importantly, to hail the translators and interpreters, who make it possible for us to understand each other and who bring the world closer to us, in a language that we can understand.

A word, a sentence and a paragraph have one thing in common – the lexicography.

Be it spoken or written, it can build bridges or divide nations. I have therefore come to cherish the words of former President Nelson Mandela in this regard and I quote:

*"If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in **his** language, that goes to his heart."*

We need to once again reinforce the importance of translation and the subsequent use of all indigenous languages to the full. It is an integral part of what we need to achieve in South Africa today. It is even comprehensively included in the Freedom Charter, as adopted at Kliptown on 26 June 1955, that:

"All people shall have equal right to use their own languages"

Programme Director, our indigenous languages have, prior to 1994, been marginalised.

They were not developed to their full potential and had not been acknowledged or seen as important to apply in the fields of, for instance, science and technology.

Today, 11 official languages are constitutionally recognised in accordance with Act 108 of 1996 in the constitution of the Republic of South Africa. It is therefore truly significant to be celebrating this August Day in Limpopo, where the majority of these languages are being spoken and promoted!

Government has fully committed itself to the promotion and encouragement of multilingualism and in embracing translation, the National Language Policy Framework of 2003 encourages dissemination of information to be in more than just the previously utilised languages, namely Afrikaans and English.

It is also important to note that communicating with the people of this country in their own languages, is pivotal in service delivery excellence.

However, there is an even more important aspect to multilingualism - that is, the power to unite a nation!

Programme Director

I am encouraged by the presence of the youth here today. I see in front of me a generation that is passionate about indigenous languages and the full use thereof. They need to know that the demand is growing for well-trained professional practitioners with a wide range of skills and knowledge and the capacity to deal with the challenges of translation and terminology. They will be the ones that continue the legacy of ensuring that our people are able to get access to information in their own mother tongue.

It is also inspiring for us to be able to award and reward our aspirant writers today, for their efforts in promoting mother tongue languages through original literary words.

We congratulate the winners of the Literary Competition and hope that their success will be an inspiration to many more aspiring writers, including the youth of this Province. In the spirit of translation and interpretation, we also congratulate those students who have completed a course in sign language interpretation and we applaud them for their efforts to include our hearing impaired communities in all our programmes and projects as the government of the people, for the people.

I now wish everyone here, a happy International Translation Day or St. Jerome's Day, as it is also known. I believe St. Jerome is the patron saint of translators, who has also started the culture of translating the Bible into languages understandable to all. Let us follow in his diligent footsteps!

I thank you!

Ke a leboga!

Ndzikhensile!

Ndolivhuwa!

Ngi ya thokoza!

Shukran!

Baiedankie!