



Address by the Sedibeng District Municipality Executive Mayor, Cllr. Mahole Simon Mofokeng on the occasion of the DM Khunou Choral Festival held at Mphatlalatsane Theater in Sebokeng on the 18-19 September 2010, in Sedibeng

Programme Director, MMC Cllr. Mluleki Nkosi;

Our distinguished guests;

People of Sedibeng;

Members of the Media present

We are once more meeting here today to celebrate and showcase our talents in the field of choral music. Those who were here yesterday when the festival started would agree with me when I say, indeed there is a lot of improvement.

Those of you who are first time visitors and participants in Sedibeng, formerly known as the Vaal. It is with the first sweet note and melody to the last beat of the rhythm in this choral festival that the spirit of the giant Ntate Daniel Khunou is moved and stimulated. As part of our Heritage

Month in the country, the Sedibeng District Municipality is hard at work once again to showcase our rich heritage.

You are once more visiting us during the month and period when we in Sedibeng and surely the country are commemorating the 26th Anniversary of the Vaal Uprisings. In this month 26 years ago, the community of Sedibeng, then called the Vaal Triangle, woke up to take to the streets in protest against the increase in rates and taxes by the then Councillors they did not elect.

From the length and breadth of the townships that today constitutes Emfuleni Local Municipality, the communities under the leadership of the Vaal Civic Association and the Congress of South African Students with support from the Vaal Ministers Solidarity Group went on what they thought would be a peaceful march to present their memorandum.

The regime, as it was used to at that time, opened fire randomly killing 72 people in a very short period of time. The community responded by attacking businesses that the councillors had undeservingly allocated to themselves. By the end of that weekend, there was hardly a single shop standing in the township. Most of them had been burned down.

Programme Director, coming back to what brought us together here yesterday and today, I am pleased to inform all the participants, the audience and the people of Sedibeng that we are at the forefront of the restoration and highlighting our heritage in the Gauteng Province in particular and the country in general.

Some of you will recall that last year for the commemoration of the September 03rd Vaal Uprisings, we correctly adopted the theme, *“Our heroes-Our Legacy-Lest we forget”*.

This theme was able to bring into sharp focus the importance we attach to our rich legacy and history. DM Khunou, as the leading light in choral music in the country was put into the spotlight. We read and spoke about him last year, we honoured his contribution in song and a choral festival was held this year during the month of March.

This year our theme for the heritage month which was kick-started by the September 03rd Memorial Lecture, the theme is *“Together with our communities-A final push towards reclaiming our heritage”*. This choral festival started yesterday, is an important part of our heritage here in Sedibeng.

We cannot allow it to disappear, we must keep it alive for the benefit of the generations to come. We had the pleasure of enjoying the rich and full

life of Ntate DM Khunou, we can only keep this legacy for the coming generation. From what I have seen and heard of this festival, I am convinced that we are on the correct path.

It is with every choir and chorister that came out of the District of Sedibeng, that we were reminded of the greatness that this District has achieved. The sweet harmony and melodic voices of God's own children, served to reconnect us with the rhythm of His creation. The choral heritage of this country is in good hands. I am sure that it will outlast and outlive all of us, to give to the generations to come, something to be proud of.

For it is indeed true that all of us were created to play our bit in the orchestra of life on earth. Each of us, albeit in small measure, is given a piece of music to play in the universal orchestra. We are eternally grateful to our father, Daniel Khunou for the gift that his life was to all of us. Glory be to God Almighty to the life well lived, for it is the gift of this luminous life, that the light of music is brought to Sedibeng from far and wide.

The Department of Sports, Recreation, Arts, Culture and Heritage, as the leading light in our District in this regard, has without fail, exceeded all expectations again in making this art form alive and kicking.

We pride ourselves as Sedibeng District Municipality, with our warm welcome to our guests, it is as you enjoy the warmth of our beautiful District, that we invite you to cool your heels at the River Lekoa, as you soothe your parched throats with its revitalizing water.

We invite you to enjoy the hospitality of the myriad Hotels and Lodges all over the District, the likes of which are to be found nowhere in the country. This is so because the Vaal River, is one of very few navigable rivers in South Africa and indeed the African continent.

Sedibeng District Municipality, the hallowed grounds that provided the stomping ground for the giant, Ntate Daniel Khunou, invites you to take a break, after the festival, to come and spend a day, a week, a month in the tranquility we call our home, Sedibeng District.

Programme Director, as I am about to conclude, I believe that it is important to share with my fellow brothers and sisters from outside our District a brief on our 2010 FIFA World Cup experience.

Some of you who were part of the previous festival would recall that at that time when you were here, we were preparing to host two foreign national teams, Switzerland and Ivory Coast as their base camp. Our guests were totally happy with our offerings.

No word of complaint was heard from them. The hospitality was of world class status. We provided some of the most vibrant Public Viewing Areas across the entire Region. These PVA's gave all of us who had no tickets to the games, an experience second to none.

This was surpassed by the historic public viewing of the semi finals which we watched live from the Saul Tsotetsi Sports Complex with the SABC broadcasting live from Sebokeng. This made us one of the international fan parks sponsored by FIFA

It is as we celebrate the life of Ntate Khunou that we need not to forget this international event that took place on our African soil. I invite you all to join me as I applaud and observe the good work done by our country and our Region in this regard. You may have seen on your televisions

In conclusion, we hope you will find reason to come again to the Annual Choral Festival with a view to keep alive this truly African Art form. It is without doubt, the ability and competence of the various council officials, who with much pain, assist in making this art form an integral part of our IDP.

This festival is in total alignment with Sedibeng District Municipality strategies. The IDP Strategy states that we should nurture the development of people's potential through sport, recreation, arts and

culture. The IDP Deliverable states that we should: Implement a programme for identified commemorative days (Heritage).

This festival is clear expression of that strategy and will continue to be an annual affair. To the dismay of many, we in Sedibeng District Municipality have gone against the grain, to keep the fires burning in the retention and giving life to this Nation building Art form.

I take my hat off for all the choirs and beautiful choristers, who have invested a lot of time and talent to make this event an enjoyable one.

I thank you