Celebrating African Heritage

Tuesday 10 November 2009

COMMUNITIES are united by sport and music and as South Africa prepares to host the world's soccer showcase, Sedibeng District Municipality will embrace both unifying factors via an extended African Festival.

Sedibeng Executive Mayor Mahole Simon Mofokeng says the festival will be a year-long initiative demonstrating the region as "a place full of life" that includes a variety of arts and cultural activities, musical festivals, celebration of cultural tradition, oral tradition and expressions, performing arts, craftsmanship and film.

It will be the platform from which to promote and embrace the diversity in South African culture – cuisine, clothing, religion, storytelling and indigenous games – and afford other African countries the opportunity to showcase their cultural practices.

"As part of spicing the activities en route to the FIFA World Cup Soccer tournament, the African Festival will be a potential regional economic booster and source of job creation, the latter being one of the core pillars of government's economic policy," he says.

The series of events are expected to incorporate work and artistry from a host of African countries including South Africa, Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Angola, Ivory Coast, Zambia, Morocco and Tunisia and will unify Africans around music in the same way as the FIFA World Cup Soccer tournament will achieve that aim via sport.

"The opportunity afforded to any country to host the World Cup presents a lifetime chance for human development. By hosting this august event, the whole African continent, and not South Africa alone, will reap the lasting legacies before, during and beyond 2010 FIFA World Cup," Mofokeng says.

He adds that alongside the tangible legacies including infrastructure and improvement in safety, the event promises intangible legacies enshrined in the four-yearly world football tournament such as knowledge and skills development.

"The 2010 FIFA World Cup is thus the vehicle through which to build a globally-competitive region, while investing in people to foster self-reliance and access to economic opportunities in a stable, democratic and inclusive environment," he says.

The African Festival will incorporate South Africa's landmark events in December (16 days of activism against women and children abuse); March (human rights month); April (freedom month) and June (youth month and the FIFA World Cup Soccer tournament).

Mofokeng says the initiative aims to build unity among communities; release human potential and market Sedibeng to attract potential investment.

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