

**ADDRESS BY HIS WORSHIP CLLR MORRIS MATABOGE
DURING THE LAUNCH OF THE DISTRICT THP HELD ON
THE 24TH MAY 2018 AT O.R.TAMBO HALL IN MODIMOLLE
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THE 24TH MAY 2018 AT O.R.TAMBO HALL IN MODIMOLLE
MOOKGOPHONG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY AT 10H00**

Programme Director,

Mayor of Modimolle Local Municipality Cllr Marlene van Staden,

Speakers led by the District Speaker Cllr Lamola,

Chief Whips led by the District Chief Whip Cllr Tsebe,

**Magoshi a rena led by the Chairperson of the Local House of
Traditional Leaders, Kgoshi Kekana,**

MMCs and Exco- Members,

All Councillors present,

**District Executive Manager of the Department of Health Ms
Bulanga**

**Outgoing Chairperson of the District Council of Traditional
Health Practitioners, Mr Mohatla,**

**Outgoing Secretary of the District & who is also the Provincial
Secretary of the Traditional Health Practitioners, Mr Maluleka,**

**All Traditional Health Practitioners Committee members from our
Local Municipalities present,**

Senior Officials from All sector departments and municipalities,

Members of the Media,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Thobela. Avuxeni.

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This day marks a milestone and a turning point in the Waterberg District as we celebrate Africa Month in remembrance of those who played a

role in our struggle for liberation and the war against colonialism and exploitation.

This launch also takes place as we embark on centenary celebrations for former president Nelson Mandela and struggle activist Albertina Sisulu to bring South Africans closer together. The theme for Africa Month 2018 is **“A Year of Nelson Mandela – Building a Better Africa and a Better World”**. As Africans in Africa Month, today we also celebrate our cultural heritage and the role played by Traditional Health Practitioners in our society.

On behalf of the people of Waterberg, I take this opportunity to salute you and pass a token of appreciation for your presence in this grand occasion as we launch the Traditional Health Practitioners Committee in the District.

Programme Director, Traditional Healers are legally recognised in South Africa as **"Traditional Health Practitioners"**, under the Traditional Health Practitioners Act No 22 of 2007, as diviners alongside with herbalists, traditional birth attendants, and traditional surgeons. These categories of traditional health practice must undergo education or training at any accredited institution or with any traditional tutor.

The act calls for the establishment of a National Council of Traditional Health Practitioners to regulate and register all authentic sangomas in the country. However, it was only in December 2011 that the National Department of Health took action and opened nominations for seats on an interim council.

All Traditional Health Practitioners must be registered with the Council. In November 2015 the Traditional Practitioners Regulations were gazetted to enforce the registration and training of Traditional Health Practitioners. Failure to do so you cannot practice as a traditional health practitioner in South Africa.

Ladies and gentlemen, A true traditional healer is someone who has been through initiation, inducted by an expert in the field, who has undergone rigorous training and completed external healing courses. If a patient complains of headaches, they will be given plants with painkilling properties. But the healer will also try to establish the root cause of the headaches, and treat that too.

This may mean the healer will provide counselling to the patient. Treatment is usually holistic, and a once-off ointment will generally not do the trick. Many clients come for help with their relationships or marriages.

A potion may be given to open the communication channels between couples, so that they can speak about their problems. Counselling will also be on offer, but there is no quick-fix solution.

Traditional Health Practitioners of South Africa are practitioners of traditional African medicine in Southern Africa. They fulfill different social and political roles in the community, including divination, healing physical, emotional and spiritual illnesses, directing birth or death rituals, finding lost cattle, protecting warriors, counteracting witches, and narrating the history, cosmology, and myths of their tradition.

Programme Director, there are two main types of traditional healers within the Nguni, Sotho-Tswana and Tsonga societies of Southern Africa: the diviner (also called *sangoma*), and the herbalist (also called *inyanga*).

These healers are effectively South African shamans who are highly revered and respected in a society where illness is thought to be caused by witchcraft, pollution (contact with impure objects or occurrences) or through neglect of the ancestors.

It is estimated that there are as many as 300,000 indigenous traditional health practitioners in South Africa compared to 30,000 Western-trained doctors.

Traditional Health Practitioners are consulted by approximately 70% of the South African population, usually in conjunction with modern biomedical services.

Programme Director, Traditional healers occupy a strategic position in terms of discussing prevention, treatment and care programmes. The respect they command within their communities should be seen as a vital communication resource that can be tapped and utilised as a key to the containment of the HIV and AIDS epidemic.

The other role would be that of rendering family support and driving the adherence to both the anti-retroviral treatment (ART) and TB treatment programmes. We want the Traditional Health Practitioners to encourage HIV positive individuals to take their treatment while they are being assisted.

I am thus sure that you will agree with me that our province's efforts to curb the spread of the number of diseases, in particular HIV and AIDS and TB, are more evident especially in our district because of the high prevalence of HIV and AIDS due to mining activities.

The spiritually curative medicines prescribed by a traditional healer are called muthi. They may be employed in healing as warranted in the opinion of the herbal specialist or inyanga. Muthi is a term derived from a Zulu word for tree.

African Traditional medicine makes extensive use of botanical products but the medicine prescribed by an inyanga may also include other formulations which are zoological or mineral in composition. Traditional medicine uses approximately 3,000 out of 30,000 species of higher plants of Southern Africa. An experienced inyanga will generally seek the guidance of an ancestral spirit before embarking to find and collect muti.

The healer, through dreams, or during prayers, will be advised of an auspicious time for collecting the plants, and in some cases will be told which particular plants to collect for a specific patient and where these plants are located. The healer supplements the advice from an ancestral spirit with their own knowledge, training and experience

Mary Bungeni, a Traditional Health Practitioner herself, explains that Sangomas don't do miracles and there is no such a thing as doubling a person's money. They only help to connect with the ancestors, who gives them directions on how to heal and assist people in need.

The ancestors get angry when people play with their name and end up taking away the powers and a calling given to a person. The real sangomas are not rich because they are controlled by the ancestors. The bogus sangomas cause people not to believe in the ancestors and God because they lie about their work with the ancestors.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have to indicate that Traditional Health Practitioners in the district have done well when it comes to initiation schools. I am told that since 2015 to date we have never experienced death or fatalities at these schools in the district. We are hopeful and confident that same will be achieved during 2018 initiation period.

Programme Director, as we celebrate this achievement and to the newly elected leadership, we say you must be able to deal with bogus traditional practitioners within the district who cause death and undermine the true practice of our heritage.

Ladies and gentlemen, we will take it upon ourselves that all Traditional Health Practitioners in the district are trained and registered. Working together with our stakeholders, we shall make sure that as municipalities, both local and district, traditional health committees are supported as they coordinate their activities.

Let me take this opportunity to congratulate and wish the newly elected committee an effective term of office

Together we move Waterberg and South Africa Forward.

I THANK YOU. KE A LEBOGA.

