

SPEECH OF THE MEC FOR SPORT, ARTS, CULTURE AND RECREATION, MR DAN KGOHULE, DELIVERED BY THE HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT, ADVOCATE TSHOARELO MALAKOANE, ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSLATION DAY CELEBRATION, 29 SEPTEMBER 2011, TROMPSBURG

29 September 2011

Programme Director

Executive Mayor of Xhariep District, Councillor M.G. Ntwanambi

Mayor of Kopanong Local Municipality

Language Practitioners from Various Institutions

Officials in the Free State Provincial Government

Ladies and Gentlemen

Comrades

Language is the glue that binds human beings together. The interconnectedness of humanity, particularly at this time of globalisation, will not be possible without communication which is facilitated by language. In our own country we have taken into account the significance of language amongst language communities that constitute our society to a point that we had to enshrine language rights in our constitution.

It is for the very reason of the significance of language in our society that we also celebrate International Translation Day which is celebrated annually on the 30th September.

The International Translation Day is also the day set aside for the remembrance of St Jerome, the Bible translator, who is considered the patron of translators. These celebrations have been promoted by the International Federation of Translators since 1953.

This day is marked to show solidarity of the worldwide translation community in an effort to promote the translation profession in different countries. According to the Wikipedia encyclopedia this day provides an “opportunity to display pride in a profession that is becoming increasingly essential in the era of progressing globalisation.”

In the Free State we as the department have been partnering with the Free State office of the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) in marking the day with celebrations. From 2008 the department partnered with Mangaung Local Municipality and other municipalities in the former Moseley District (now Mangaung Metro).

Last year’s celebration was held in Mantsopa Local Municipality in Ladybrand and was preceded by a two day workshop on translation and interpreting and the assistance to the Mantsopa and Naledi Local Municipalities to finalise their language policy documents.

This year we have continued with what we did last year. The department is still partnering with PanSALB, Mangaung Metro and Kopanong Local municipality in celebrating this day. A day long workshop was held yesterday where all towns invitees from all town of the Kopanong Local Municipality were given an insight into translation and interpreting services.

Today the Kopanong Local Municipality will be assisted with the drafting of their language policy.

The department’s commitment to the promotion of multilingualism, redressing past linguistic imbalances and developing the previously marginalised languages is evidenced in:

- The development of the provincial language policy which is now on course. An interdepartmental committee has been set up to finalise the policy document and to prepare a costed implementation plan that will be consulted with the departments. We hope to finalise the process by the end of this financial year.
- We have undertaken various projects which include providing the Sesotho equivalents to the terms and phrases frequently used in the department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation to enable our officials to communicate with the public in the language best understood by the public. Literature development is also taking place. Apart from the formation of the Free State Writers Forum last year, the department will continue with the Macufe Wordfest, a conference that will bring all literary practitioners under one roof on 6 and 7 October. The last Wordfest was held in 2008 where a poetry anthology, titled Mokolokotwane 2008, was mooted and later published. This year we expect not less than 150 writers to assemble in Bloemfontein for the Wordfest.
- The interpreting unit is currently under construction. Interpreting equipment to the value of R 100 000 is being procured to ensure that the unit is able to assist with communication within the department and among other departments. Although we have only one South African Sign Language interpreter our vision is to ensure that the Deaf community is properly accommodated by not only offering interpreting services but also by coordinating such services within the department and among other departments of the Free State Provincial Government.

These are, but, a few examples indicating the department's commitment to language development. The pinnacle of our projects was the launch of the Sesotho Soccer Terminology booklet for the 2010 FIFA World Cup that we staged as the country. This booklet exhibited the quality of language practitioners we have in this province. We need to entrench the spirit of partnership that exists amongst language practitioners in the province which led to the development of such a resource.

This celebration-cum-workshop on translation is an important platform that we must use to further enhance language development and translation in our province.

The issues being dealt with at this workshop touches on the core of what we need to be doing constantly. These include:

- Translation: Bridging Cultures
- Machine-aided Translation
- Practical Translation
- Interpreting

It is important that we should roll-out these workshops to all our municipalities as we are doing. Municipalities are at the coal face of service delivery and they therefore have to be equipped with the necessary skills of communicating in languages that people needing service delivery use.

May I take this opportunity to thank all the stakeholders who continue to partner with us in this quest for language development in the province.

Let the good work continue unabated.