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Press Statement:

National Heritage Day Commemoration

“Our Heritage and Cultural Diversity Unifies and Brings Us Together During Covid-19 Times” Says CoRMSA.

Every year, South Africa celebrates and commemorates its National Heritage on the 24th of September and the whole month of September is recognised as a national heritage month. The significance of this month and day rests in recognising various aspects of South Africa’s diverse culture and beliefs, tradition and heritage. Furthermore, this day provides an opportunity for all to reflect on what it means to be a South African resident in the context of fostering a unified vision of a South Africa that embraces its peoples in all their diversities of beliefs and traditions, race, nationality, gender and ethnicity, rather than what divides the nation such as xenophobia and racism.

This day’s celebration is extended to all who live in South Africa including the asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in honour of their distinctive cultural diversity and heritage that add in brightening up South Africa as a rainbow nation. It is on this incredible note that, CoRMSA joins the rest of South Africa in commemorating this Heritage month under the theme, **“The year of Charlotte Mannya Maxeke: Celebrating South Africa’s intangible cultural heritage.”** Which explains the dynamism and meaning of social life to generations of people as individuals, social groups and communities.”

Building on the above, CoRMSA argues that in a broader social and political context, heritage day celebrations and commemorations are a powerful instrument of promoting everyone’s identity, fostering reconciliation and promoting the conception that diversity is everyone’s best asset and not an element of igniting conflict and hatred among ourselves. Conversely, CoRMSA notes that rather than celebrating our diverse heritage together in this Covid-19 pandemic, with asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, as a “united nation in our diversity”, xenophobia, violence, discrimination and hatred have dominated. This has seen the exclusion of migrants being denied access to health care services, education and social security services, making it very difficult for them to live a meaningful life. All these unremorseful actions betray the whole essence and progressive idea of the intangible cultural heritage that aims at providing us with a unifying thread so that such diversity becomes the derivation of a continued, peaceful, dynamic and integrated South African Societies where solidarity and unity thrive regardless of one’s nationality.

CoRMSA believes that ***Our Heritage and Cultural Diversity Unifies and Brings Us Together During Covid-19 Times*** and that fostering social cohesion, nation building and a shared identity can be achieved if we all share, respect and recognise one’s heritage and culture. Therefore, CoRMSA, calls on all South African communities inclusive of locals, asylum seekers, refugees, migrants and the LGBTQI+ to use this year’s Heritage Day and month to strengthen social cohesion, peaceful co-existence and nation building. CoRMSA further calls the relevant authorities to encourage and further build unified democratic communities where we all live together as one regardless of nationality or documentation status and for the Department of Health to provide an equitable access to Covid-19 vaccination with no prejudices based on one’s nationality statuses.

“United in our diversity...” South African preamble.

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