STATEMENT FROM THE MEC FOR SPORT, RECREATION, ARTS AND CULTURE ON THE DEATH OF MIRRIAM MAKEBA

“UWIL’UMTH’OMKHULU – THE GREAT TREE HAS FALLEN”

The MEC for Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture, Mrs Noxolo Abraham-Ntantiso, wishes to express her words of condolence to the millions of South Africans and to the entire community of the world on the death of the stalwart, Mama Miriam Makeba.

Mama Afrika, as she is affectionately known, has her roots in the little town of Cumakala (Stutterheim) in the Eastern Cape. Born on the 4th of March 1932 in Johannesburg, Mama Afrika has always identified with the Eastern Cape and has been adored and respected by artists in this province. In recognition of her contribution to arts in general, not only as a musician, but also as a film actress and an inspiration to the arts practitioners, the Province of the Eastern Cape resolved to name the centre housing the first ‘state of the art’ recording studio situated in East London, after her. The centre was named the ‘Mirriam Makeba Performance Centre’. This centre is meant to provide audio recordings, video recordings and graphics facilities to the communities of the Eastern Cape and is subsidised by the government. It is through this centre that we hope to keep the legacy left by Mama Afrika. The centre has started functioning and a number of groups have already recorded their albums, including a group from Germany, the Soko Jazz Band.

The Eastern Cape joins the world in mourning this sad loss. At the age of 76 years, Mama Afrika was still committed to arts and to fight crime through out the world, hence her participation at the concert in Italy, where she ultimately passed on.

‘Uwil’umth’omkhulu’. May her soul rest in peace.

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Media is welcomed to call to arrange interviews.

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