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South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA)
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Minister of Social Development: Nokuzola Tolashe
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Minister of Small Business Development: Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams
Department: Department of Small Business Development (DSBD)
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Family Focused
Justice
NPO

289-983 NPO

Positive Cannabis Culture Initiatives

Parliamentary Petitions Office
Email: petitions@parliament.gov.za

The Parliament of South Africa
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Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE)
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Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC)
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Department of Small Business Development (DSBD)
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Department of Arts and Culture (DAC)
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Department of Traditional Affairs (DTA)
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Agricultural Research Council (ARC)
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The South African Parliamentary Committee on Justice and Constitutional Development.
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SAPS Commercial Crimes Unit
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Provincial & Parliamentary Stakeholder
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SABS Technical Committee (cannabis/hemp standards)
Email: Mpodi.Manaka@sabs.co.za

The Honourable Minister of Justice
Minister: Ms. Mmamoloko Tryphosa Kubayi, MP
Email: Ministry@justice.gov.za

The Honourable Minister of Correctional Services

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The Honourable Minister of Police

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Email: Ministry@SAPS.gov.za

The Honourable Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition

Minister: Mr. Parks Tau

Email: ministry@thedtic.gov.za

The National Commissioner of the South African Police Service

Email: complaints.national@saps.gov.za

Parliamentary Portfolio Committees on Police, Justice, and Trade & Industry

Email: justicecommittee@parliament.gov.za

South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC)

Email: ceo@sahrc.org.za

Independent Police Investigative Directorate (IPID)

Email: complaints@ipid.gov.za

Office of the Public Protector

Email: registrar@protect.org

Honourable Mr. President, Ministers, and Commissioners

RE: CANNABIS AS HERITAGE: FROM PAST TO FUTURE

On this Heritage Day, we draw attention to cannabis as a plant deeply rooted in South African tradition, healing, and rural livelihood. For generations, it has formed part of cultural practice, medicine, and community resilience. Yet its true value has remained locked away, treated as a burden rather than the national asset it is.

For centuries, cannabis has been cultivated, traded, and used in South Africa, from Khoisan practices to Nguni healers and rural farmers across every province. It is both medicine and livelihood, woven into traditional healing, ceremony, and community strength. Unlike imported crops, cannabis thrives in our soil under the power of the African sun.

This heritage is not folklore; it is living knowledge, still carried by communities who have safeguarded it for generations.

Seeds of Progress

This Heritage Day, we can celebrate two milestones that mark a turning point:

1. **Skills and Training:** The Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has opened formal training for hemp and medical cannabis permit holders. This creates pathways for youth, rural communities, and traditional growers to enter a regulated economy with skills that matter.
2. **Seed Facility in Pretoria:** The Agricultural Research Council is establishing a national cannabis and seed multiplication facility. This facility secures genetics, drives agricultural innovation, and positions South Africa as a continental leader in cannabis science.

The seed is the cornerstone of every biological industry. In cannabis it carries the DNA of our history and the promise of our future.

By safeguarding our seed, we safeguard our sovereignty, our science, and the foundation of a future cannabis economy built on South African sunshine and indigenous strength.

Protecting South Africa's Landrace Legacy

South Africa is home to globally renowned landrace strains: Durban Poison, Swazi Gold, and Malawi Gold, heritage genetics uniquely adapted to our climate and sought after worldwide.

These strains are not commodities to be lost; they are national assets.

- **Some accounts describe Transkei / Pondoland (Eastern Cape):** Tall, narrow-leaf sativas, often purple-tinged, adapted to coastal mists and sandy soils, known locally as *Mpondo Gold*.
- **Local growers speak of KwaZulu / Zulu Strains (KZN):** Hardy mountain sativas from the Drakensberg, citrus-spiced in aroma, cultivated for centuries.
- **Reports from Limpopo communities describe:** Drought-resistant mixes, sometimes called *Venda Skunk* in underground circles.
- **Ciskei Strains:** Interior Eastern Cape landraces, piney terpene profile, less globally documented but locally revered.
- **Lesotho Highlands:** Compact, resinous, high-altitude plants, prized across borders.

Neighbouring heritage strains: Mozambique Gold, Angola Red, Zimbabwean and Botswanan genetics, also form part of the wider Southern African cannabis heritage.

These genetics carry traits (drought resistance, terpene diversity, natural resilience) that modern hybrids often lack.

Without protective custodianship, there is a **risk** that foreign actors may attempt to patent or commercialise our genetics without recognition or benefit to the communities that have preserved them.

Heritage as Future

Taken together, these milestones show South Africa standing at the threshold of an inclusive cannabis future, one that honours heritage, builds skills, and unlocks economic potential.

Heritage Day reminds us that our past carries the seeds of our future. Cannabis is one of those seeds. With vision and commitment, it can grow into a sector that reflects who we are, uplifts communities, and strengthens South Africa's place in the world.

As advocates, we are too often called to point out what is broken, excluded, or unjust. On this Heritage Day, we also recognise the small wins that signal change: the acknowledgement of cannabis as part of our heritage, the training opportunities now opening, and the national seed facility being built in Pretoria.

These are not the end of the struggle, but they are proof that South Africa is moving forward. Today, we celebrate progress, however modest, as a foundation to build upon — so tomorrow, heritage, healing, and opportunity in cannabis will belong to all our people.

Respectfully

Charl Botha B.Proc (S.A)
(Electronically Signed)

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