

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

**DATE: Saturday, 14 November 2020**

**TO: All media**

**ATTENTION: News Editors/ Reports**

**For Immediate use:**

### **MINISTER NZIMANDE WISHES THE HINDU COMMUNITY A HAPPY DEWALI**

The Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, Dr Blade Nzimande, extends his good wishes to all the Hindu Community in the higher education, science and innovation sector and South Africa in general, as they celebrate Dewali or Deepavali – the Festival of Lights.

On this holy day, devotees around the country and the world light lamps that symbolises the victory of light over darkness.

"This festival, celebrated each year by the Hindus, Sikhs and Jains across the world symbolises new beginnings and the triumph of good over evil, and light over darkness," said Minister Nzimande.

Dewali is widely celebrated in honour of Rama-chandra, the seventh avatar (incarnation of the god Vishnu). It is believed that on this day Rama returned to his people after 14 years of exile during which he fought and won a battle against the demons and the demon king, Ravana.

"Chapter 2 of the Constitution of South Africa, containing the Bill of Rights, states that everyone has the right to freedom of religion, belief and opinion, it is in this spirit that as a Minister and a government, we join the multitudes in wishing the Hindu community well as they celebrate the Dewali festivities," said the Minister.

Minister Nzimande further said that as a country we must use this special occasion to further cement harmony, unity and togetherness amongst all our people in celebration of our country's cultural and religious diversity.

May this day bring peace, prosperity, happiness, success and fulfilment as the Hindu community celebrate this important annual occasion.

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