

VIRTUAL ADDRESS BY THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO, MR CHUPU STANLEY MATHABATHA ON THE OCCASION OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH DAY CELEBRATIONS.

16 June 2021

Programme Facilitator, MEC Thandi Moraka;

Other MECs present in this platform;

Our Director General, Ntate Nape Nchabeleng;

Various formations representing our young people across the Province;

Members of the Media;

Valued young people of our Province:

Thank you for connecting with us through various online platforms.

This is the second edition of the national Youth Day which is being commemorated under the Covid-19 restrictions.

Our tradition is that we celebrate and commemorate days such as this through rallies and other mass gatherings.

We have been forced to do things differently because of an invisible enemy called the coronavirus.

It is for this reason that defeating the coronavirus pandemic is at the top of our priority list as government.

This is a must-win fight, a fight we cannot afford to lose. Our victory in this regard is largely dependent on us working together. It is only through a

partnership between the government and the public that we can indeed defeat this deadly virus that has so much disrupted our lives.

On this National Youth Day, I wish to take this opportunity to salute all the young people who are at the forefront of this war against the coronavirus pandemic. I want to salute our young nurses, our young doctors, our young health researchers, our young laboratory workers and all our youth who are in the healthcare sector.

To them I want to say that you are our modern-day-heroes, you are leading this brave fight from the front.

I also want to salute those young people who have been encouraging and assisting our elderly people to register for Covid-19 vaccination.

Your great and selfless sacrifices will go a long way in helping to eliminate this deadly virus from our world.

As we are preparing to defend ourselves from the looming third wave of Covid-19 pandemic, we know that you as youth will lead from the front and ensure that the coming surge does not become deadly.

There is no phenomenon that can defeat the collaboration and determination of young people.

We dare not forget that, it was the relentless determination of young people of 1976 and generations of young people before them, that helped to defeat the most brutal and evil system of colonialism and apartheid.

The same youth tenacity that defeated apartheid will certainly help us to defeat the coronavirus pandemic.

Programme Director and dear young people of our Province

We are celebrating this year's National Youth Day under the theme that says: **The Year of Charlotte Mannya Maxeke: Growing youth employment for an inclusive and transformed society.**

The theme has married the precious name of Mama Charlotte Maxeke with the task of growing youth employment. There is no doubt that Mama Charlotte Maxeke would have advised that education is a necessary condition to achieving the goal of youth employment.

I am saying this without any fear of contradiction because Mama Charlotte Maxeke was herself an epitome of academic excellence and lifelong learning. As a young person, Charlotte Maxeke responded to the call of self-empowerment through education without hesitation.

Mama Charlotte Maxeke was the first Black South African woman to earn a degree.

President Nelson Mandela would have used Mama Charlotte Maxeke as an example when he said that **education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.**

We hope and appeal to you as today's generation of young people to be emulate the passion of Mama Charlotte Maxeke with regard to education and learning in general.

Your government has done significantly well with regard to the task of opening the doors of learning and culture.

It is the policy of this government that no child who is academically deserving should be denied access to education simply because he/she

comes from a poor background. Under this ANC government, education is no longer an exclusive preserve for the rich.

All what you need to access the doors of learning, is to demonstrate academic merit. You simply have to show that you take your books seriously and that you deserve a chance.

As we speak, over 90% of children in this Province do not have to pay school fees because of the progressive policies of this ANC government. Our No-Fee School policy has ensured that thousands of children are not denied access to basic education simply because their parents cannot afford.

Our government continue to build new schools or more classrooms in existing schools. Our program of building more schools include a focused attention of Special Schools to cater for the needs of our children who are living with disabilities.

Our School Nutrition Program also play a significant role in ensuring attendance and attention in class. These are the youth-friendly policy interventions of a caring government.

Your challenge as young people is to take advantage of these policies and the support from your government and empower yourself through education.

You must always remember the judicious words of President Mandela when he said that **it is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor; that the son of a mineworker can become the head of the mine; and that a child of farmworkers can become the president of a great nation.**

DEAR YOUNG PEOPLE;

As you embark on the necessary journey for self-empowerment you must remain vigilant against tendencies and characters that may seek to derail your progress or even to destroy you.

You must always be vigilant against self-destructing tendencies such as violence, disrespect and anarchy.

You must always be vigilant against dubious characters such as drug pushers and drug dealers who are always desperate to attract you to their dark world.

You must resist these things because they are designed to derail your progress and ultimately destroy you.

We have seen many promising young lives ending behind prison doors because of violence, disrespect and anarchy.

We have seen beautiful and promising young lives ending up on the street corners because of alcohol and substance abuse. There is nothing good that can ever come out of a bottle of alcohol. The use of drugs will always lead to a lonely road toward destruction and peril. Choose your friends carefully.

Programme Director;

I will not have done justice if I conclude my message without adding a voice against the pandemic of Gender Based Violence.

As young people you must take the lead in this battle to end the violence that is directed at women and the children of our country.

You must add your voice in saying that the women of this country have had enough.

We need to hear your loud voice in denouncing those who perpetrate any form of violence against women. You must be loud in saying that there is simply no excuse or justification for valance, particularly violence against women and children.

I also wish to take this opportunity to commend the Limpopo Division of the High Court for handing down two life sentences against Aubrey Manaka who ruthlessly raped and killed Precious Ramabulana.

While nothing can bring back the beautiful life of Precious Ramabulana, we hope that this sentence will send a clear message to perpetrators of violence against women.

We believe that the time has come for the review of our parole laws. People who are convicted for such heinous offences should spend far more than just half of their sentences before they can be considered for parole.

It has to be clear that parole is a special privilege and not an inherent right for rapists and convicted murderous.

I want to conclude by reminding everyone that Covid-19 remain vicious and alive. Let us continue wearing our masks, keeping the necessary social distance and sanitizing as regularly as possible.

I thank you.