

**ADDRESS BY THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO, MR CHUPU
MATHABATHA ON THE OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL
OPENING OF THE PROVINCIAL HOUSE OF TRADITIONAL
LEADER.**

20 MAY 2021

Chairperson of the House, Kgoshi Malesela Dikgale;

My esteemed Traditional Leaders from all the five Districts of our
Province;

Leadership of CONTRALESA in Limpopo;

Our MEC for CoGHSTA, Ntate Biaskop Makamu;

Friends from the Media;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and gentlemen.

I am always honoured by the invitation to address this august
house of our Traditional Leaders in the province.

It is not always that one finds himself in the company of royalty,
this is always a rare moment of high significance. I am saying this

partly because of the strategic and unique position of traditional leadership in our province.

I am also saying this because traditional leadership in our province is a reliable ally of our Provincial Government.

I cannot over stress the point that in Limpopo most of government's development programs and initiatives takes place on a land that is under the jurisdiction of traditional leadership.

Traditional leadership is the closest and most trusted institution in most of our communities.

I therefore come to this House with this understanding in mind. We always interact with this House with the full awareness of the strategic role Traditional Leaders occupy in our communities.

As a leader of government, I am able to state with confidence that our relationship with our Traditional Leaders is at all-time best.

There are challenges, but we continue to relate well in the true spirit of cooperation and mutual support.

The guidance and support we receive from various traditional councils is indeed valuable.

I know that this type of support and cooperation does not only happen at a provincial level only.

I know that our district and local municipalities continue to engage Traditional Leaders and seek their counsel on various issues of development.

Chairperson of the House

The opening of your esteemed House is taking place at the time when our country is celebrating 150 in honour of Charlotte Maxeke. Therefore, it is befitting that the sitting of this August house embraces the contribution to freedom and democracy by Charlotte Maxeke.

In addition, the session comes at a time when the world community is being ravaged by the coronavirus pandemic. We had thought and wished that by this time the virus would have been completely eliminated from our world.

Unfortunately, coronavirus remains vicious and alive.

Limpopo and the country have lost a number of Traditional Leaders to this killer virus.

‘Mabu a utswitswe beng baka.

Go wele mekgapa ye megolo gomme dinonyana tsa lla boshogoshogo.

Re lahlegetswe rele setshaba.

Bagale le bagaleadi ba iketse badimong ba bona.

Le nankhono, ditshaba disa ikgonne se nko.”

On that important note, we once again take this opportunity as the provincial government, to send our deepest and sincere condolences to all the families, relatives, traditional councils and communities, who have lost their beloved Traditional Leaders due to Covid-19 related complications.

This virus does not discriminate. We have seen it taking the lives of royalties and commoners. We have seen this virus take the lives of filthy rich people and the poorest of the poor.

We have seen admired politicians succumbing to this virus. I want to take this opportunity to once again express my heart-felt condolences to the families and traditional councils which have lost their loved ones because of this virus.

May their souls rest in peace!

Chairperson of the Session

I also want to commend members of this House in your leadership capacities of various traditional councils for your support and leadership in the fight against this pandemic.

I know that most of you have had to suspend some of your hallowed cultural practices and rituals because of the existing Covid-19 regulations.

This is indeed a temporary pain and a temporary inconvenience.

Your sacrifices in this regard is evidence that you value the lives of your people more than any other thing.

This virus will be defeated and we will go back to our normal lives.

In this regard I want to appreciate the leadership you have shown with regard to embracing the Covid-19 vaccine program.

I know that on Tuesday our Chairperson, Kgoshi Dikgale received his Covid-19 jab as part of our phase two vaccination program. I also know that many other Traditional Leaders have already received their vaccination.

This is what leading from the front means. This is indeed leading by example.

After receiving my jab on Monday, the teams in Mokopane Hospital and DR CN Phatudi hospitals managed to vaccinate over 900 people on that day alone.

The following day on Tuesday, our other vaccination stations at Polokwane Hospital, Mankweng, Donald Frasier and Saint Ritas vaccinated an average 500 people per station.

We are confident that during this first leg of phase 2 vaccine rollout, we will manage to vaccinate 8 000 people this week alone and around half a million people during the coming weeks.

With your continued support and cooperation we will be continuing to vaccinate many other eligible Traditional Leaders across the province.

Our collective challenge is to ensure that our elderly who qualify for this phase two vaccination program, do indeed receive their vaccination. No one should be left out.

Chairperson of the House:

Headman and Headwomen play an important role in supporting the work of our Kings, Queens and Chiefs. It is for this reason that we are committed, as government, to ensuring that they too are able to conduct their work with less hinders.

I am able to say that our government is still continuing with the recognition of Headmen/women who are in the Status Quo Report so that they be included in the PERSAL system. We are still making a clarion call to our Makgoshi to submit names of their Headmen/Headwomen who are in the Status Quo Report for recognition by the Provincial Government.

I am also pleased to announce that our provincial government has already implemented the Presidential proclamation on the adjustment of the salaries of Traditional Leaders. This salary adjustment has also affected the salaries of the Chairperson of the House of Traditional Leaders, his Deputy and allowances for part-time members of the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders.

The only challenge in this regard is the fact that the Commission for the Remuneration of Salaries for Public Office Bearers has not yet determined the benefits of qualifying members of our local houses. We are confident that this matter will be resolved soon.

Members of the House

Our commitment to support the institution of traditional leadership would be hallow without substance if Traditional Leaders are not assisted with the tools of trade.

I have accordingly noted that the 5 years lifespan of the vehicles which have procured for Senior Traditional Leaders expired in March this year. I have accordingly instructed the MEC for CoGHSTA to facilitate the process of procuring new vehicles for Senior Traditional Leaders.

On the other hand, have allocated an amount of R57 Million for construction and refurbishment of Traditional Council offices for 2021/22 Financial Year. This amount will cater for projects already underway and for the construction of 8 new offices across the province.

In addition, government has set aside R5 Million to procure furniture for 21 Traditional Council Offices across the province.

Historically, Traditional Leaders were the ones responsible for feeding the poor in our communities. Now as the Premier of the province, I declare that, all Traditional Leaders to be appointed from now moving forward, will receive a brand new and fully equipped TRACTOR for ploughing, 4 female and 1 male cows. This initiative is aimed at making sure that traditional councils revive their culture of feeding the poor in our communities.

Beng Baka, Maapara Nkwe

I am the first to agree that in its current form, the SPLUMA legislation has caused an unsettling discourse amongst Traditional Leaders in our Province. As a listening government, I

am pleased to inform the House that proposed amendments by this House and from CONTRALESA will inform the makeup of the new legislation.

I am able to say that there is currently a Bill in place and processes to finalize the Bill into an Act of parliament are at an advanced stage.

Chairperson and Esteemed Majesties

Before I conclude my remarks, please allow me to invite this august house, to join us as the provincial government in our ongoing celebrations of our capabilities as a state.

We are indeed celebrating the quality audit outcomes received from the AG for the previous financial year. We are proud because we have permanently eradicated Disclaimers in our provincial government.

We are celebrating because never again shall it be that, this majestic Limpopo will be counted among the worst managed provinces in our country.

With 5 clean, 9 unqualified and 2 qualified audit opinions in the bag, Limpopo today is better place to be than it was a decade ago. 'Thabang le rena ka moka gobane le rena re thabile'.

We also wish to take this opportunity to celebrate quality audits opinions in all our municipalities of the province. Today, we don't have any DISCLAIMER audit opinions in our municipalities. We have recorded significant improvements with regard to audit outcomes of our municipalities. That is why we are celebrating and it is worth it.

In addition to that, please allow me to report to the house that this government is on track as we implement the provincial Economic Recovery Plan. This plan is among others, one of our key pillars as we troubleshoot the detrimental effects of Covid-19 pandemic.

Along the Economic Recovery Plan, as mandated by President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, EXCO in Limpopo has approved the Limpopo Development Plan, in line with the National Development Plan targets.

What all of these means is that, our focus will be to sustain these quality audit outcomes and translate them into delivering of quality basic services. This government, your government is aware of the existing backlogs on water provisioning, unfinished roads, shortage of electricity, need for jobs particularly for young people, to name but a few.

Our commitment to eradicate the triple challenge of poverty, unemployment and inequality still stands. While fighting coronavirus, we have a renewed zeal and commitment to deliver quality basic services to our people.

In addition to the above, I am pleased to announce that we have successfully launched the District Development Model throughout Limpopo. Our last destinations being Mopani and Sekhukhune.

We report about this DDM project because through it, we aim to eradicate silo mentality in government planning regimes. Here, like President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa has said, we are for One District, One Plan, One Budget and One Approach.

We therefore wish to thank all our Traditional Leaders who have always been part of government as we move towards improving the living conditions of our people.

Therefore, through these well crafted blueprint policy directives, we are optimistic that we will majestically emerge victorious. This we will do, as the great grand sons and daughters of our warrior Kings and Queens. BoMakhado, Ngungunya and Sekhukhune.

Chairperson of the Session

Ever since we met, there have been few social developments which I wish to bring to your attention.

Today, our country and our province is suffering from another pandemic called Gender Based Violence. This pandemic of GBV has equally resulted in the death of many young women and children.

We are appealing to everybody in society to please play a critical role and help to end violence against our women and children. Traditional Leaders are urged to play a leading role to curb the spread of this GBV pandemic.

Another phenomenon that equally threatens to disrupt the future of our young people is bullying at our schools. We have seen bullying resulting in the death of a young learner Lufuno Mavhunga, of Mbilwi Senior Secondary School.

From the untimely death of Lufuno, so much cases of bullying at schools have emerged. We therefore call upon you our Esteemed Traditional Leaders to play your part and ensure that we end this barbaric acts.

Because it can't be right that this barbaric acts happen within our communities were as leadership you're based. Please ensure that you mobilize all resources in order to deal viciously with all the challenges confronting society today. With your support, we shall overcome.

I want to conclude my address by reiterating our Covid-19 message. It is absolutely necessary that as leaders we must lead by example and help to save the lives of our people.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Ndo livhuwa!

Na khensa!

Kea leboga!