

WELCOME NOTES BY THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO, MR CHUPU MATHABATHA
ON THE OCCASION OF THE VIRTUAL NATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY
CELEBRATION.

Programme Director, Minister Nathi Mthethwa;
President of the Republic of South Africa, His Excellency, Honourable Matamela Cyril
Ramaphosa;
Esteemed Cabinet Ministers;
Members of our Parliament;
My colleagues in the Provincial Executive Council, our MECs;
Members of the Provincial Legislatures;
Various organisations of women in our country;
Our Esteemed Traditional Leaders;
Leaders of All our Political Parties;
Our Faith-based Organisations;
Friends from the Media;
The beautiful women of our country;
Esteemed ladies and gentlemen:
Good afternoon, Dumelang, Avuxeni!

I greet you in the iconic name of Mama Charlotte Mannya-Maxeke. My task is to welcome you to this important commemoration and celebration in our national calendar, the National Women's Day.

We are celebrating this year's edition of the National Women's Day under the theme that says "THE YEAR OF CHARLOTTE MANNYA-MAXEKE: REALIZING WOMEN'S EQUALITY".

As Limpopo we are proud to host this special event which is being celebrated in honour and memory of Mama Charlotte Maxeke. Mama Charlotte Mannya-Maxeke is the daughter of Limpopo – her roots are firmly grounded on our soil. Charlotte Maxeke was born at Ga-Ramokgopa in the Capricorn District of our Province – ke morwedi wa ga Mannya kuwa Botlokwa.

We are therefore happy that 150 years since her birthday, her name and legacy lives on. On our part as a Provincial Government and as the people of Charlotte Maxeke, our contribution to honouring her legacy is to continue the fight against the exclusion and the oppression of women.

We are committed to fighting against gender oppression in all its different manifestations. We know that we cannot proudly associate ourselves with the name of Charlotte Maxeke while we keep silence when women are raped and mutilated; We cannot claim to be worthy heirs of the legacy of Mama Charlotte Maxeke if we perpetuate or tolerate the emotional abuse of women; We can't claim to be the descendants of Charlotte Maxeke while we dine and wine with those men who do not financially support their wives and children; We can't say that love Charlotte Maxeke while we still discriminate against members of the LGBTQI community.

The Charlotte Maxeke in whose memory we are celebrating this National Women's Day hated exclusion, oppression, discrimination and violence.

As the Provincial Government of Limpopo, we are all hands on deck, acting in partnership with social partners to realise the ideal of women's equality in our life time.

We have put in place a number of equity measures to support our drive for equality.

This is not a special favour we are doing for women, equality is an inherent human rights.

Programme Director

It would be a grave injustice if I concluded my welcome remarks without recognising the gallant effort of the many women of our province and our country in the battle against Covid-19.

Most of the healthcare workers, the doctors and the nurses who are in the trenches against this invisible enemy, are women.

We have launched women's month as a province and most of the activities by different sectors are spearheaded by women, particularly to benefit the poor and marginalized in our communities.

Mme Charlotte Manny Maxeke a daughter of the soil, a first female science graduate is being celebrated by women from all walks of life.

Just to name but a few, Limpopo is blessed with a number of different female medical specialists who are spending this month honoring Mme Charlotte Maxeke, the woman who paved their way.

They are today rendering their specialists services in rural areas. Amongst others, surgeons in different specialities are spending weeks in rural hospitals operating patients, eg our female Ophthalmologists will be operating 150 cataracts to poor people in the villages.

The victories we have recorded thus far against this deadly virus is owed to their selfless and fearless efforts by women.

Indeed, Charlotte Maxeke would have been proud of the bravery of the women of this generation.

Women have also been leading when it comes to the important task of vaccination. Our numbers are confirming that women are providing practical leadership against this virus. This is our moment to say to all the women of our country that, with you leading from the front, we know that victory is certain.

Programme Director

As I conclude, I want to say that our work is far from being completed. We should not and we will not rest until the total liberation of the women of this country.

The women of this country must indeed be liberated and freed from fear, abuse, victimisation, sexual harassment, rape and murder.

We must never rest for as long as women and girl children continue to become victims of abusive cultural practices;

We should not rest for as long as boardrooms in the private sector remain White and male dominated;

We should not rest as long as there are those men who require court orders for them to maintain their children and wives;
We should never rest for as long as women continue to be beaten and abused by their husbands;
We should never rest for as long as the rape and mutilation of women continues.
We are no not prepared to forget the gains that women have made since the 1956 Women's march to the Union Buildings.

We are fully aware that the 1994 democratic dispensation was achieved amongst others because of the immense contribution by women.

As we battle with the triple challenge of poverty, unemployment and inequality, we know fully well that Covid-19 is threatening to reverse the gains that we have made since 1994. Having gathered here today, we take this opportunity to send our message of support to all the mother's, daughters, wife's and girl children, who are suffering from all manners of abuse. We are calling upon our law enforcement agencies to show no mercy when they deal with perpetrators of women abuse.

As Limpopo we are confident that women have risen, young women are rising and all women will emerge victorious against all odds.

With those few words of welcome, I wish to take this opportunity and say 'happy National Women's Day to all the women of our country'.

I thank you!