

ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA AT THE WATERBERG
PRESIDENTIAL IMBIZO SHONGOANE SPORTS GROUND, LEPHALALE,
LIMPOPO

26 NOVEMBER 2019

Programme Director,
Minister of COGTA, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma,
Premier of Limpopo, Mr Stanley Mathabatha
Ministers and Deputy Ministers,
MECs, MPs and Members of the Provincial Legislature,
Executive Mayor of Waterberg District Municipality, Cllr SM Mataboge,
Traditional and religious leaders,
Esteemed Councillors,
Leaders in the business community,
Representatives of various civil society organisations,
Distinguished guests,
Fellow South Africans,

Thobela. Dumelang. Avuxeni. Ndi Masiari. Goeie dag.

I am pleased to be here in the Waterberg District Municipality to launch the third Khawuleza District Development Model in the country.

This is a province rich in minerals and land resources, but it still suffers from high levels of unemployment, currently at 28%.

As a result there are high levels of poverty in this province with nearly 300,000 people relying on social grants to survive.

Youth unemployment remains a major problem with many of our young people falling victim to substance abuse and crime.

Like many other districts in the country, our people here are experiencing challenges with the delivery of services, especially of water.

We are here because we have heard the concerns of the people of this district for us to act to ensure our municipalities deliver on their mandate to serve our people, and that they should be cleaned up of corruption and mismanagement.

The District Development Model we launched today is a break from a past where government departments did not plan properly and imposed projects on communities without taking their needs into account.

The district-based model is about putting local government at the centre of our country's growth and development.

By doing this, we are affirming the people's power to govern and determine their own destiny.

We want to put an end to the tendency of departments working in silos and developing plans from above which do not respond to the challenges faced by our people on the ground.

It allows government departments at national and provincial levels to combine resources and work together towards the implementation of a single plan – developed locally and coordinated at a district level.

We are very clear: 'One District, One Plan, One Budget, One Approach.'

We are meeting here to get a better understanding of the challenges that communities face here, and to find ways to work better together to meet these challenges.

We know that the people of this district are confronted with severe unemployment and poverty.

We know about the problems of water, electricity, sanitation and roads.

We know about access to land.

We are also aware of the poor telecommunications network, which frustrates our people and hampers economic development.

Working with you –the communities of Waterberg, local businesses, traditional and religious leaders, women, youth, people with disabilities, civil society formations –we know we can resolve these challenges.

Waterberg has great potential to become an economic powerhouse in Limpopo and dramatically improve the lives of its residents.

Through the implementation of four catalytic projects –the completion of the Medupi power plant, the second phase of the Mokolo water resource management project, the expansion of the Waterberg rail line and the construction of new schools in the Mokgalakwena Municipality –significant jobs will be created and local businesses supported.

This area is endowed with critical minerals which can serve as a solid basis for

industrialisation.

We know for example that mining companies in Waterberg are implementing 74 projects to the value of R580 billion, ranging from infrastructure to enterprise development.

But we need to overcome challenges of permitting, unreliable electricity supply and the scarcity of water.

We need to work together to lower the barriers to entry for emerging mining companies so that we can really transform the industry.

Coal mining is a major source of jobs in this region, and the industry will become even more important as we complete the construction of Medupi.

At the same time, we will be diversifying our energy resources, with a greater reliance on renewable energy.

We are committed to a just transition towards low-carbon energy sources, and will plan with affected communities to ensure that they continue to have economic opportunities into the future.

The fertile soil and good climatic conditions of the region mean that Waterberg can have a thriving, highly advanced and profitable agricultural sector.

But we need to respond to the increasing risk of drought, and the high cost of imported equipment, fertiliser and seed.

We are working through our biodiversity economy strategy to ensure more of our people benefit from the wildlife industry.

We have heard the call for partnerships between government and other stakeholders to ensure that more black individuals can enter this industry.

There is a great land hunger in this area.

We will be working through the district development model to finalise land claims and accelerate the pace of land reform.

Through this new model we are bringing development to where our people live and work.

Waterberg should be the tourism citadel of South Africa, with its remarkable biodiversity, spectacular scenery and wildlife.

To achieve this, however, requires that we develop our infrastructure, from roads to hotels to reserves, that we implement an effective tourism safety plan, and that we train a new generation of young tourism professionals.

We want to ignite economic activity and make villages, towns and cities thriving centres of business.

We want to bring to an end the practice where big companies from outside the province get all the big contracts and local businesses suffer.

Local procurement will be a priority when projects in this district are implemented.

Beyond this, local community members will be prioritised for employment.

To address youth unemployment we are focusing on driving a skills revolution not just in Waterberg but across the country.

A focus of this administration is to reform public education to produce more young people with critical skills needed by our economy.

We have prioritised funding of our TVET colleges that offer artisan courses like bricklaying, welding, boiler-making and computing.

More of our schools are being converted into technical schools where subjects will be taught to prepare our young people for the new digital age.

We want to see marine scientists, engineers, renewable energy entrepreneurs and inventors coming from this community.

This new model will enable us to have line of sight on what educational interventions are needed.

The new district-based development model is not only about service delivery.

It is also about the holistic development of our communities.

Working together means that citizens also need to play their part, by getting involved in making decisions in all areas that affect their lives, by working together to implement change, and by ensuring that they pay for the services they receive.

There is great untapped potential in Waterberg

Let us work with each as active partners to ensure this district grows and thrives and that its people prosper.

I thank you.

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Pretoria