

ADDRESS BY THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO MR CHUPU MATHABATHA ON
THE OCCASION OF THE PROVINCIAL FREEDOM DAY CELEBRATIONS
HELD AT BAKENBERG STADIUM.

27 April 2019

Programme director,
Members of the Provincial Executive Council,
Executive Mayors and Mayors of our local municipalities,
Traditional leadership,
Leaders of various political parties
Representatives of faith based organisations,
Members of the Media,
The people of Limpopo,

Good morning! Thobela!

Thank you very much for responding in such large numbers to this freedom
celebrations.

We are here to celebrate 25 years of our democracy.

On this day we commemorate the first democratic elections in this country which
were held on the 27 of April in 1994.

These were the elections which abolished apartheid and ushered in a new hope,
a new dawn, our democracy!

On this day 25 years ago, the people of this country elected Nelson Mandela as
the first Black President of South Africa.

Nelson Mandela is also the first democratic president of this country –because all
other presidents before him were not elected through a democratic vote.
On this day we remember that apartheid was a very evil and brutal system which
did not recognise Black people as equal citizens.

Apartheid government introduced many laws which made the life of a Black
person painful and difficult to live.

Black children were only given the education which prepared them to work as
servants of their White counterparts. This type of education was known as Bantu
education.

When young people protested and rejected Bantu education, the apartheid government responded by sending the police to shoot and kill them. One of the youngest victims who was killed by apartheid police for rejecting Bantu education was the 11 year old Hector Peterson.

Bantu education was designed to ensure that Black children do not get the opportunities to be trained as medical specialists, scientists, accountants and other important professions.

The apartheid government wanted our kids to go to school only to be trained how to become a good garden boy or an effective kitchen girl.

In 1994, through President Mandela we said we were going to change things and they said we could not change a thing.

We said that we would create an equal education which would be accessible for all, they said it was impossible.

Today as we speak there is no longer education for the White people and education for the Black people; we have one single education system.

In the past, only those who came from rich families were able to go to universities and colleges. Today that is a thing of the past; the government has ensured that each child who is working hard is able to access university or college education. Even those who come from the poorest families are able to go to the university because we have a government that cares.

In this Province, the government has opened TVET Colleges in every region. Those who come from poor families receive free education in these colleges.

Our School Nutrition Programme, Scholar Transport and the No-Fee School policies remain amongst the best interventions by this ANC government.

To date, the Feeding Scheme programme in our schools feeds thousands of learners in almost 4 000 public schools. Through this feeding scheme, we have ensured that children do not miss school days simply because they do not have anything to eat at school.

This can only be done by a caring government.

Because of this freedom and democracy we have able to introduce the Scholar Transport Programme in our schools. This programme benefits learners in almost 380 schools. These are indeed the fruits of the freedom we are celebrating today.

It does not end there; this democratic government has introduced a No-Fee School Policy to ensure that children from poor families don't have to pay school fees. Today in Limpopo, over 1.6 Million children do not pay school fees. This is what democracy has brought to the people of Limpopo.

When we took over in 1994, we said that we would build an economy which would work for everyone –they said we were not going to be able to run the economy.

In the last five years alone, our Provincial economy was able to create over 317 permanent jobs for the people of Limpopo.

We are looking forward to creating even more jobs for the people of this Province.

In this Waterberg region, there are a number of job creation investments which are in the pipelines.

I can tell you that we are also excited about the new investments in the Ivanhoe Mine in Mokopane.

The current investment in this mine is at R4.5 billion. We are looking forward to the mine going into full operation by 2024. This mine is expected to create well over 25

jobs. These are the jobs which will benefit most of you.

Programme Director;

For many of our people, the struggle for freedom and democracy was also a struggle for access to basic services.

You know that in the past, piped water, electricity and tarred roads were things of the cities.

Black people in rural villages were not considered for these basic services. Today as we speak Limpopo is no longer a dark province, there is electricity almost everywhere.

In 1994 there were only about 30% of houses which had electricity. Today as we speak, almost 95% of houses in this province are connected to electricity. This is a massive development which should be celebrated.

In the coming five years the government will focus more attention and resources on ensuring that our people enjoy uninterrupted access to clean potable water. We have already spent millions of Rands on water infrastructure. What is going

to happen now is that we are going to ensure that the available infrastructure takes water to the homes of our people.

When President Mandela said that this ANC government was going to build houses for the poor, we were told that such a dream was not realisable. Today I am proud to tell you that in the last 5 years alone, Limpopo has built over 43

houses for the poor. These are the houses which have been given to our people free of charge.

These are the fruits of our hard earned democracy.

Programme Director;

On this day, we also celebrate the protection and advancement of human rights which are entrenched in our constitution.

We celebrate the right to freedom of movement and association, freedom of expression, religious freedom, freedom of sexual orientation and the right to own property.

We celebrate the rights of workers to belong to a trade union, equal pay for equal work, health and safety at work and the right to strike.

Our Affirmative Action Policies have ensured that women take their rightful place in society as equal citizens before the law.

There is no doubt that the past 25 years have restored the dignity of women. We have indeed travelled a long road since 1994. We have covered much ground.

We have built schools and hospitals. We have constructed bridges, dams and world-class power stations.

Even at the face of the many challenges we have as a nation, we know that our future is in good hands and that the future is indeed bright.

Let all of us be the defenders of our freedom and democracy. Let no one and nothing to reserve the gains of our freedom.

Before I conclude, I want to take this opportunity to remind all of you of your duty to vote on the 08th of May.

Let us go out in our numbers to defend our democratic gains through the power of the ballot box.

It is because of your votes that we have managed to do all the things we have done in the past.

Through your vote again, we will achieve much more.

It is important that we go out and vote so that we can have a government which will continue to deliver services to all of you.

The future of this country is in your hands.

It is your responsibility to contribute towards the task of growing South Africa.

Let us go out in our numbers to vote on the 08th of May.

I thank you!
Pula!!