

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY LIMPOPO PREMIER CHUPU
MATHABATHA DURING OPENING MECKLENBURG
HOSPITAL CASUALTY WARD, 26 JULY 2016, 11H00,
MECKLENBURG HOSPITAL, SEKHUKHUNE DISTRICT**

Programme Director;

MEC for Health, Dr. Phophi Ramathuba;

Magoshi a rena le bakgoma

Sekhukhune District Executive Mayor Cllr Mogobe Magabe

Greater Tubatse Local Municipal Mayor Cllr Mamenkwa

Councilors from the district and local municipalities

Acting Head of Department;

Departmental and municipal officials;

Members of the media;

Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning

Programme Director, with your permission, let me start-off by borrowing from the well said words of Martin Luther King, Jnr.

When he said, and I quote:

“Property is intended to serve life, and no matter how much we surround it with rights and respect, it has no personal being. It is part of the earth man walks on. It is not man”.

In line with what Martin Luther King Jnr said; I wish to emphasize that we can have world class health professionals, but as long as we do not have proper infrastructure it will be difficult for the department to provide quality healthcare services to our people.

This therefore speaks to the importance of our visit to this hospital today.

We are here to ensure that the efforts of our hard-working health professionals are supplemented by supportive public health infrastructure.

The fact of the matter is that some of our healthcare infrastructure is old and dilapidating; some need to be renovated while others deserve totally new buildings.

You have to bear in mind that this hospital structure started operating as a clinic 46 years ago, with only four rooms.

These rooms were serving as:

- Consulting room
- Dispensary and injection room.
- Single bed labor room, and

- Single bed postnatal room

By that time even the population was not as big in numbers as it is today, hence the facility has been upgraded from a clinic to Community Health Centre in 1994.

This was following the completion of the two operating theatres when the facility was converted into a Level One hospital.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The expansion of the health center to a hospital would have not been possible if all stakeholders did not collaborate.

In this regard, I wish to commend the support and leadership of the Magadimana Ntweng Tribal Authority under the leadership of the Ntwampe Royal Family.

Your leadership made our work much easier.

Your support reminded us of the timeless words by Karl Marx when he said that: ***“Surround yourself with people who make you happy. People who make you laugh, who help you when you’re in need. People who genuinely care. They are the ones worth keeping in your life. Everyone else is just passing through.”***

The work done in this facility and many other efforts in the health sector are evidence to our commitment of bettering the lives of our people.

It is for this reason that communities are always happy to be closer to the ANC-led government; this is the government that listens to the plight of the people.

The completion of this facility is one of many projects which the department has put in place with the purpose of providing quality services to our people.

Some of you may know that already this month, we have turned the soil for the building of the state of art clinics at Schoongesicht and Mamushi in Capricorn District.

We have also opened a world class hospital in Thabazimbi including a clinic at Smashers Block.

In order to address the EMS challenge, we will open the EMS building at Masisi in Vhembe district in the next few days, whilst next we will be back in this district when we hand over Mamone clinic to the community.

This is service delivery at its best to our communities.

We are making a dream of a better life for our people to become a reality.

Programme Director;

We are alive to the fact that some of the challenges that are still experienced in this facility.

Part of the inherited challenges was the fact that:

- The OPD was not designed for the capacity of the 105 bed
- The entrance to the hospital was narrow and inappropriate.
- The pharmacy was very small
- An X-Ray Department that was not built to standards
- An inadequate patient admissions area
- Space in then OPD was a serious challenge. The hospital was always packed to capacity with patients, and passages were used as waiting areas.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are happy that despite the community's dissatisfaction about the above-mentioned challenge you remained calm and wait patiently for the department to deliver its mandate.

You did not destroy or even burn the hospital because you wanted something big.

This is also support Martin Luther King Jnr's words of wisdom that: "***Non violence is a powerful and just weapon, which cuts***

without wounding and ennobles the man who wields it. It is a sword that heals”.

This facility belongs to the community of Moroke and surrounding villages, you have to protect it like you are protecting your homes, families and other properties.

Programme Director,

We are appealing to all the communities to visit our healthcare facilities on regular basis in order to test for different diseases. Gone are those time when people will only go to the healthcare facilities when they are sick.

There are Non Communicable Diseases which are said to be hiding, and opportunistic like diabetes, hypertension, cancer, obesity just to mention a few, which are very dangerous when they are not treated from an early stage.

By testing to know your status you will assist because the department is moving from the most expensive curative approach to the user-friendly preventative approach.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As you know, last week the country hosted a successful 21st International AIDS Conference in Durban, some of the issues that

were raised are the high HIV/AIDS infection rate amongst young girls.

This is a worrying factor because of older men and the so called “Blessers” who entice the youngsters through expensive gadgets, clothes and money.

The communities should join forces with government in intensifying the slogan ***hashtag BlessersMustFall***.

In this process two people are involved being the Blessers and the Blessees, this must stop to ensure that our country’s ambition of having an AIDS free society by 2030 is realized.

As we are heading toward local government elections of 03rd August, bear in mind that the ANC has outgrown the promising and planning stages, now we are implementing what has been planned in line with the National Development Plan Vision 2030.

The ANC was there for you and continue to be there by providing quality services.

We are aware as the ANC government that you are not asking complicated issues from government, all you want is quality basic services, of which government is trying its best to provide.

This was once raised by the former President of the ANC and the country Thabo Mbeki who said: “***Many of our own people here***

in this country do not ask about computers, telephones and television sets. They ask - when will we get a road to our village”.

As we round off the International Mandela month, we believe that you have done something towards this world icon’s wish and you will continue to make everyday a Mandela Day.

We have to remember that it was through Nelson Mandela and his collective within the ANC who fought tirelessly to ensure that today we are enjoying the fruits of freedom.

Their blood nourished the tree of freedom from which we are harvesting the fruits of a better life for all.

As I conclude, I wish to remind you that local government elections are just days away.

These elections provide us with yet another opportunity to renew the mandate of our public representatives at a municipal level.

Let us go out in our numbers and vote. The future of this country is in our hand; we simply cannot afford to be irresponsible with this future because it belongs to our children and generations to come.

Let us work together to move Limpopo and South Africa forward. At the end of the day local government is in our hands

Thank you