

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY MAKOMA MAKHURUPETJE THE MEC FOR  
TRANSPORT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY DURING THE PASSING OUT  
PARADE OF LIMPOPO TRAFFIC OFFICERS, LIMPOPO TRAFFIC COLLEGE,  
MUTALE, VHEMBE DISTRICT

01 FEBRUARY 2019

Executive Mayor of Vhembe District Municipality Cllr Mavhungu Luruli  
Mayor of Musina Local Municipality Cllr Mihloti Muhlophe  
Traditional leaders here present  
Members of Mayoral Committees; Chief Whips and Speakers  
Head of Department of Transport Ms Hanli Du Plessis  
Head of the Department of Community Safety Ms Nchabeng Tsebe  
Head of Traffic Services in the Department of Transport Ms Jane Mulaudzi  
Head of the College, and our Trainers and Instructors  
SAPS Representatives  
RTMC Representatives  
SANDF Representatives and Instructors  
Chief Directors and Directors  
Our Traffic Graduates  
Parents and Guidance  
I salute you all.

It is my singular honour to preside over this special ceremony of handing out certificates to successful graduates of our distinguished Traffic institution –the Limpopo Traffic College. Since assuming the responsibility of this portfolio, it is my first time to officiate in your graduation, and for this I remain eternally grateful.

I would like to express how much proud we are as a department to see you graduating today after a full year of dedicated training. You have met the standards demanded by this College, and this makes you our winners.

For you to attain the high standards demanded by this College and its instructors is without any doubt a commendable achievement.

By passing this course today, you have not only done yourselves proud, but have also made your instructors happy. I believe your families and loved ones are also proud to claim your achievement as their own. I am equally thrilled to see you fly pass in your immaculate uniform. Great things await those who have worked hard and persevered to reach this heights.

Programme director

As a Department of Transport, we are pleased that of the 242 learners that we

appointed for the Learnership on Basic Traffic Diploma in January 2018, 238 are today graduating. Of this number, 10 will be completing certain modules before they receive their certificates in Basic Traffic Diploma.

The graduates you see here today have met the standards required of them and are now qualified to enforce the National Road Traffic Act 63/1996, the National Land Transport Act 5/2009, Dangerous goods Act, AARTO Act 45 of 1998, Fire Arm Act 60/2000 and other Legal subjects.

Over and above these critical subjects, our learners were also trained in modules that follow military procedures since the Traffic profession in its entirety is a para-military one. The SANDF assisted us a great deal in imparting military practices, from drills to management of parades.

They also taught trainees on how to manage the protocols which go with the wearing of the Traffic uniform. Our learners were taught that unlike any other casual wear, a Traffic uniform carry with it the authority of the state and has its own directives on how Officers should wear such uniform in terms of the Traffic Code of Conduct.

All these should tell you that Limpopo Traffic College does not compromise on high standards. We are a reputable institution and are not a fly-by-night school. We are equally not known for producing mediocre graduates. Our College is a fully recognized institution that is accredited and registered with SASSETA to provide all Traffic related professional courses inclusive of the Basic Traffic Officer Course, Examiner for Driving Licences and Examiner of Vehicles certificates. Each course that we offer has its own modules.

To this day we remain one of the best providers of Traffic qualifications in southern Africa. The fact that we have for years been able to attract trainees from as far afield as Lesotho, Namibia, Botswana, and other provinces tell the whole story about who we are.

As I have already said, this Traffic Course is fully accredited and is monitored by the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) as the body that supply the examination. It took these learners 12 months to complete this Diploma and we are highly satisfied with their level of competence.

But you should be aware that nationally the RTMC is taking giant steps to strengthen Traffic qualification in view of the high number of fatalities we are experiencing in South Africa's roads. Two three year Traffic qualifications have been developed and registered at NQF level 6 by SAQA. These are:

- a) NQF Level 6 Traffic Officer Qualification; and
- b) NQF Level 6 Road Safety Officer Qualification.

Training has already started for the Road safety qualification at the RTMC Traffic Training Academy focusing on provincial road safety practitioners and recruitment of 300 learners is underway for the Traffic Officer Qualification training.

It is envisaged that these qualifications will be phased in at our College in two years'time.

Having said this programme director, I'm aware that our College still faces many infrastructural backlogs that need to be addressed. I'm aware that our infrastructure is old and derelict as a bigger part of it is inherited from the former Venda Defence Force barracks.

In order to address this challenge, the department has embarked on a phased approach to refurbish most of the infrastructure we inherited starting with the dormitories that will be refurbished this year at the tune of R20 million. As I speak programme director, I'm pleased that the contractor has taken site of the project and work in this regard will begin in earnest.

We have prioritised student residences for refurbishment because we want students to be trained under liveable and habitable conditions.

We have also prioritised the purchase of vehicles as working tools for our traffic officers to execute their mandate. This year an amount of R10 million will be set aside to purchase high powered vehicles for the exclusive use by our traffic officers.

Programme director

Your graduation comes at a time when vehicle and driver population in the province have seen a significant increase since the previous years. Compared to the same period in 2017, the last two months saw an increase of 713 993 vehicles compared to 693 109 vehicles. This marks a growth of 3.01% or 20 884 additional vehicles on our roads. This calls for an increase in the number of road networks but also for more traffic officers with vehicles to enforce the law. We need more and not less traffic officers. We also need more road networks and camera equipment's especially in high populated areas and growth towns.

Notwithstanding this factor, we remain proud of the strides made by our officers during the festive season. From 395 accidents reported in 2017, we managed to reduce this number by 389 last year.

The number of fatal crashes during the same period also reduced from 144 to 138 last year. This marks a reduction of 4% and puts our province at number three on reduction of fatal crashes in the country following Gauteng at 13% and Northwest at 6%.

Congratulations to our traffic officers once more!

As we continue to do everything in our power to reduce fatalities, it is equally important that we pay particular attention to pedestrian deaths. Over the festive season we saw a high number of pedestrian deaths which in my view can be prevented.

Working closely with taverners and shebeen owners, our Traffic regulation branch is now working out a deliberate strategy to curtail the high number of these deaths especially in our rural roads. We must see a difference after implementing this strategy.

Programme director

Your future begins today. Your work to bring order in our streets starts now! There are no lone rangers in law enforcement because battles require teams. Individuals working alone will have very little power to succeed if not reinforced by teams. As we deploy you after this graduation, you are going to have to learn to work together and not as individuals.

Wherever your paths lead you - always remain humble and stay true to your calling. Whether you choose to remain in the Provincial Traffic component or decide to join other municipal traffic agencies, always know that you are first and foremost a peace officer and a defender of the law.

I impressed by the sense of professionalism you demonstrated this morning. Discipline should be the cornerstone of your success because we need officers who are well disciplined. Officers must be able to control their mental faculties but also their emotions. We don't need trigger happy officers, who are irritable at the slightest provocation.

The firearm that you will be assigned with shall always be very important for your own protection. Do not die with your firearm strapped on your body. But in everything you do always remember that you have the responsibility to use your firearm responsibly.

After today's graduation ceremony, you will be assigned to serve the community in different posts. Many of you will carry out duties on the road as traffic law enforcers.

Because life events on the road are unpredictable - your versatility shall always be called upon. Do not be surprised for instance when you are sometimes expected to play unfamiliar roles, in addition to the law enforcement role you are accustomed to. As we witnessed during the festive season, a traffic officer may sometimes be called upon to conduct a first aid procedure to a passenger or act as counsellor or mid-wife to a pregnant woman depending on the situation at

hand. Like a Swiss Army knife that you are, always be prepared to act decisively in all kinds of emergencies.

Remember, if you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always gotten. If you want to arrive at a new destination, you need to take a new path.

Also remember that character determines the height of your personal growth. Without personal growth you can never reach your full potential. We must also remember that everything we do, every accomplishment we make, every milestone we pass will happen partly because of the efforts of others. There are no self-made man or women. If we can remember that, we can always remain grateful. Congratulations to all graduates and their families for fighting the good fight and for keeping the faith.

I wish you good health, a fulfilling career with a bright future and every happiness you can ever find in your families.

Thank you once more for your attention! Ndia livhuwa Aa!