

**OPENING ADDRESS TO THE LIMPOPO BUDGET LEKGOTLA
BY THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO HONOURABLE STANLEY
MATHABATHA HELD AT THE RANCH HOTEL, POLOKWANE.**

01 NOVEMBER 2017.

Program director;

Members of the Executive Council;

Mayors and Executive Mayors of our municipalities;

Chairperson & Deputy Chairperson of the House of Traditional
Leaders;

Director General, Ntate Nape Nchabeleng;

Heads of State-Owned Enterprises;

Heads of Provincial Departments;

Municipal Managers

Chief Executive Officers;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Good morning!

I guess a proper starting point will be to welcome, and thank you for taking time from your busy schedules to honour this very important Provincial Budget Lekgotla.

As you can see, this Lekgotla is an assembly of all Provincial Government Departments, Municipalities and Provincial Entities.

This Lekgotla will impress on issues relating to the performance of our Provincial Departments, Local Government and our State Owned entities. At the core of this exercise, it is to determine **“What is to be done!”**

We therefore expect all of you to take the business of this Lekgotla very seriously.

This Lekgotla provides us with an all-important opportunity to prioritise key interventions required towards the overall achievement of the Limpopo Development Plan Strategic Objectives. The Executive Council had recently adopted the LDP mid-term report which indicated that we should focus on the key catalytic projects to advance radical socio-economic transformation for the remainder of the current term of administration.

Programme Director;

Last week the Minister of Finance, Honourable Malusi Gigaba presented his maiden Medium Term Budget Policy Statement to parliament.

In his speech, the Minister used the words of Indian development economist, **Amartya Sen**, to explain the essence of the developmental on our shoulders. Quoting from this Nobel Prize laureate, the Minister said:

“Development has to be more concerned with enhancing the lives we lead and the freedoms we enjoy. Expanding the freedoms that we have reason to value not only makes our lives richer and more unfettered, but also allows us to be fuller social persons, exercising our own volitions and interacting with – and influencing – the world in which we live.”

The minister went on to remind all of us that; our people aspire:

- to raise their children in conditions of safety, free from threats of sexual assault, drugs and gangsterism;
- to live healthy lives, with access to medical care to prevent and treat illnesses;
- to develop their capabilities through education and training, apprenticeships and employment;
- to build wealth sufficient to live a decent lifestyle now and in their years of retirement, and to leave something to their families after passing on; and,

- ...above all...to take advantage of all that life has to offer, and pursue their dreams as masters of their own destiny.

The truth of the matter is that it is ourselves gathered in this hall who have been tasked with the hallowed duty to breathe life into these aspirations of our people.

However, colleagues, as a Province we need to appreciate the fact that the development that we are talking about and so much yearn for, is taking place under unfavourable environmental conditions.

These conditions are not necessarily of our own making, they are imposed on us by the objective factors.

However, our responsibility is to interact with these objective factors in a manner whereby our primary mandate of achieving sustainable development is realised.

The Minister has indicated in his budget speech that, the country has had to revise economic growth projections downwards from 1.3 per cent to 0.7 per cent for 2017.

According to the Minister, growth is expected to increase slowly reaching 1.9 per cent only in 2020. This is the unfriendly reality

which must be at our disposal and guide our submissions and interactions in this Lekgotla.

Programme Director;

You would know that the LDP directs that all spheres of our government, including our State Owned Enterprises, should focus their plans on poverty reduction, reduction of inequality and facilitation of industrialisation programme.

According to the Statistics South Africa, there have been some marginal reduction of poverty levels in our Province.

However, our Province remains trapped in the dehumanising web of poverty which makes us only better than the Eastern Cape Province.

We need to move at an improved pace and utilise this budget review opportunity to prioritise:

- Ensure coordinated promotion the industrialisation programme;
- Ensure an integrated infrastructure support for SEZs. All Departments, Entities and the affected Municipalities should clearly identify funded infrastructure projects over 2018/19 MTEF period to facilitate a successful implementation of the

Musina SEZ. The Infrastructure cluster is directed to conclude this process before the end of February 2018.

- We need to consolidate the institutional and financial capacity of both the Department of Education and Health as a fundamental mechanism to improve on the living conditions of the poor and the working people in the Province.

We are convinced that a draft Health Turn-Around Strategy, to be presented during the proceedings of this Lekgotla, will provide an organic basis towards a provision of quality and efficient health services in the Province.

We must ensure that we bring to life the much celebrated idea of an academic hospital in our province;

We must also work to complete all the inherited Bermuda roads that I have often spoken about;

We must also improve on the governance side of our work. This means that we must intensify our Clean Audit Campaign.

In this regard, I must take this opportunity to thank those Departments and Entities which noted a progressive improvement on their audit outcomes for 2016/17 financial year, especially the Limpopo Provincial Treasury and the Limpopo Gambling Board for receiving a clean audit opinion.

We have also noted a material improvement in the Department of Education. For the first time in a long period, the Department has navigated out of the disclaimer audit opinion and therefore received a qualified audit opinion.

Our expectation remains that the Department must improve its audit opinion at least to an unqualified opinion. We are equally convinced that the Department will ensure a qualitative improvement of the Grade 12 Pass Rate by the end of 2017 academic year. Let me also take this opportunity to call on all Mayors to adopt a hands-on approach during this municipal audit season. The Mayors should ensure that the outstanding findings are resolved as a matter of urgency as a condition to improve on the overall audit outcomes.

Programme Director;

I wish to urge that when we finally receive our resource allocation the immediate duty is to ensure that such resources are utilized only for intended purpose and within the ambit of applicable prescripts.

We must always be guided by the latter and spirit of the PFMA and MFMA to ensure effective and efficient use of our limited

resources. This policy prescripts were formulated and adopted by a democratic government as means towards building a capable and accountable government.

It is clear from these prescripts that there is simply no room for wasteful, unauthorized and irregular expenditure.

We will therefore act very swiftly and harshly against those who divert these resources for ulterior purposes or self-benefit.

Lastly, I wish to take this opportunity to wish this important Provincial Budget Lekgotla a success.

I thank you!