

**RESPONSE TO QUESTION BY THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO,
MR. CHUPU MATHABATHA ON THE OCCASION OF THE
ORDINARY SITTING OF THE PROVINCIAL HOUSE OF
TRADITIONAL LEADERS, PHALABORWA.**

21 JULY 2016

The chairperson of the House;

The Deputy Chairperson of the House;

Chairpersons and members of the Local Houses of Traditional Leaders;

Your Majesties and Royal Highnesses – our Kings;

MEC for Cooperative Governance, Human Settlement and Traditional Affairs;

Baetapele baka;

Thank you very much for this opportunity to respond to your very important questions.

I must say from the onset that your questions are accompanied by valued proposals on how we can work together, as elected public representatives and yourselves as traditional leadership.

Every time I come to this House I leave with more knowledge than I had when I came. It is for this reason that I value every interaction I have with members of this House and the House itself.

With your permission, Chairperson, let me start off by extending our deepest appreciations to you as traditional leaders for a very successful Initiation season.

Although we have lost two lives, the overall score card is that of success with distinction. You did a good job.

I also wish to take this opportunity to extend the government, and my personal condolences to the families of these young initiates who unfortunately passed on in our schools.

The success of this year's season and the previous editions is owed to your visionary leadership.

This is also supplemented by the partnership between government and the institution of traditional leadership.

I can say without any fear of contradiction that Limpopo is reaping the healthy fruits of partnership, particularly the involvement of medical practitioners in this sacred tradition of our people.

Chairperson;

Without wasting time, let me respond to the questions that have been raised by honourable Members.

The first question relates to traditional leaders still getting an allowance instead of a comprehensive package as it is the case with other Public Office Bearers.

In responding to this question I wish to state and remind honourable Members that when the Democratic Government took over, the Traditional Leaders were paid differently and some not paid.

The allowance paid was very small. At the moment Kings/Queens, Senior Traditional Leaders and Headmen/women in the Republic including Limpopo are remunerated equitably according to their categories. This indicates that the Government is providing better life to all, including Traditional Leaders.

Regarding Traditional Leaders remuneration, the Independent Commission for the Remuneration of Public Office Bearers regards it as a “package that excludes benefits”.

The second question relate to the need for Politicians visiting Districts wanting to address Traditional Leaders yet not inviting all traditional leaders.

I must say from the onset that there can never be justification for such a practice. I will immediately communicate this matter to all MECs to adhere to this request, effective immediately.

There was also a matter raised about the Premier having to ***lotsha ko moshate***. Related to this was the concern by honourable Members *about Projects that are taken to areas under the jurisdiction of Magoshi without informing them*.

I must say that as the Premier I always visit Moshate to lotsha if I have visited an area belonging to Kgoshi. Where it did not, it was not deliberate.

Regarding the issue of informing Magoshi about projects to be implemented at their areas of jurisdiction all Departments and

Municipalities will be instructed to comply with the request by Traditional Leaders which to me is legitimate. Furthermore, municipalities will be instructed to provide copies of their Integrated Development Plans to the Traditional Leaders.

The other question was about the unhappiness of Traditional Leaders about participation in Municipal Councils as you feel that your functions in Councils are not clearly defined. Your concern is that the ex-officio status is not making Traditional Leaders to be effective in Council.

I can say here that the National Department of Traditional Affairs has formulated guidelines to assist in this regard which will be made available to provinces for implementation. As Limpopo we will be happy to implement such guideline in partnership with your esteemed selves.

The House also raised the concern that there is no parity on allowances provided to Councilors and Magoshi who are participating in Municipal Councils.

It was submitted by honourable Members that SALGA Limpopo promised to address the disparities in our Traditional Leadership

Indaba held during October 2013. According to Members, up to date nothing has been done.

I was requested to instruct SALGA to put their promise into practice.

To respond to this concern, I will ensure that a letter in this regard is sent to SALGA reminding them about the promise made to you during the Traditional Leadership Indaba.

There was also a submission that Magoshi who are members of the House or Council members want to be provided with Ex-Gratia or pension when their term of office comes to an end.

You demanded that legislation be promulgated to cater for such pensions just as it is the case with Councilors.

I will ensure that this matter is referred to the National Department of Traditional Affairs to put it in MINMEC agenda.

There was also a submission that when Kgoshi has passed on, his beneficiaries must continue getting the monthly allowance which was obtained by Kgoshi.

The weight of this submission is reasonable – we will try our best to engage with this matter further.

There was also a question whether as a Provincial Government did we put a specific budget to support the Institution of Traditional Leadership.

The truth of the matter is that at the moment, the financial outlook of the Province is not very good. As soon as this picture changes, efforts will be made to source funds to assist Traditional Leaders to run their Councils' administration properly.

The other submission was about the need for amendment of Chapter 12 of the Constitution to become more substantive about matters of traditional leadership.

I am requested to communicate with National government about this matter.

Indeed, your request will be sent to National Department of Traditional Affairs.

There was also a request that Traditional Leaders should be supported financially when faced with Court cases regarding matters of Traditional Leadership.

To respond to this question, I can say that recognized Traditional Leaders are being assisted by Government in their legal disputes.

We will also engage further on the request to increase the assistance for inauguration of Traditional Leaders and the need to provide funeral assistance to Bomma-kgoshi.

On the need for assistance with maintenance plan for vehicles purchased for traditional leaders, I wish to state that; When the Executive Committee of the House conduct hearings at the District level, qualifying Traditional Leaders were informed that maintenance and services will be the responsibility of the owner under which the vehicles is registered.

This has exempted Government from handling the issue of maintenance. Other car dealers are offering maintenance and service as part of the package.

There was also the question about reconstituting Traditional Councils. The request was that government should explore the possibility of reconstituting them during this financial year to avoid litigation.

I was also requested to unpack what I meant when I spoke of “substantial budget” to assist traditional leaders.

The issue of reconstituting Traditional Councils is a work in progress. Government is making all efforts to source funds to finance this activity. With regard to your request to unpack what is meant by “substantial budget”, I would like to inform Traditional Leaders that during 2015/16 financial year the Limpopo Provincial Government under approved a budget of R88.1 million to finance the activities of Traditional Leaders including the purchase of vehicles.

There was a question about vacancies at Traditional Councils which are not yet filled, and the need to fill these vacancies.

This matter is budget related and driven; we will prioritise this matter as soon as the budget situation improves as I have already indicated earlier. This is the case also with the question about the construction of a Chamber for the House.

On the issue about the revival of the school for sons of Traditional Leaders, I agree that as government we will have to provide necessary leadership, supported by your valued advises.

The issue of safety of traditional leaders, in particular the need for Flood Lights will be given necessary attention.

The House also asked the question as to how far are we with the determination of Local Houses allowances.

In this regard I wish to say that the remuneration of Public Office Bearers is not the competency of the Provincial or National Government but of the Independent Commission for the Remuneration of Public Office Bearers.

The said Commission has not yet determined the benefits of the members of the Local Houses in the country.

The other question was about the inclusion of new Headmen/women in the government's recognition processes.

Related to this question was another question as to the number of Headmen/women have been recognized in 2015/16 financial year; and whether it is true that Government is only recognizing those that are in Status Quo report?

Let me say that the National Department of Traditional Affairs has put a moratorium on all new created Headman ship positions in the country.

That moratorium was done in 2015 and it only allowed us to recognize Headmen/women that are in the Status Quo Report as indicated in my speech during the opening of this House.

Lastly, there was a submission that the Deputy Minister once said that his Department is formulating packages for Traditional Leaders.

In this regard I was requested to ask the Deputy Minister about the progress achieved regarding packages of Traditional Leaders.

Indeed I will take this matter up with the deputy minister.

I have also noted the issues you have raised around maintenance plan for your offices, and the construction of new offices. This will be a subject of continuous engagement. I am confident that at the end we will win.

Chairperson;

Once again let me thank you very much for affording me this time.

As the political head of our province, I am much privileged to be supported by men and women of this esteemed House.

As you know, in a matter of weeks we will be going to the local government elections. In the previous elections traditional leaders have played an important role in ensuring the conduct of free, fair and credible elections.

We again look up to you for such a support and leadership.

Part of it is to allow IEC officials to do their work freely in your communities as you have always done in the past.

Related to this is to encourage your subjects to go out in their numbers and vote on the 3rd of August.

Every single vote counts. It is important that you make your people's voices to be heard in this election.

Let us continue our winning partnership to move Limpopo forward.

I thank you!