

ADDRESS BY THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO, MR CHUPU MATHABATHA ON
THE OCCASION OF THE PROVINCIAL WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATIONS,
HELD AT MAKHUVHA STADIUM, THULAMELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY.

09 August 2019

Programme Director,
Our leader, Vho Thovhele Gole Mphaphuli;
Members of the Executive Council;
Executive Mayor of Vhembe District Municipality, Cllr. Dowelani Nenguda;
Mayor of Thulamela Local Municipality, Cllr. Avhashoni Tshifhango;
All Councillors present today;
Our Director-General, Ntate Nape Nchabeleng;
Representatives of Women's Organisations;
Leaders of various political parties;
Ladies and gentlemen:
Ndi matsheloni vhatu vhothe, Ndaa Vho Thovhele!!

We are happy to celebrate this year's National Women's Day with the people of Limpopo in Vhembe.

This day is very important in our country and it is a very important day for the women of this country.

We are celebrating this day because 63 years ago, in 1956 women of this country marched to the Union Buildings to reject the apartheid policy which wanted to extend pass laws to women.

This was a march of all women, Black and White, educated and uneducated, those from the urban areas and those coming from the remote villages of our country. It was these women of 1956 who reminded all those who were fighting against apartheid that without unity there could be no victory.

In their own unique and powerful way, the women of 1956 made apartheid to be unworkable. It was the efforts of this generation of women that contributed so much for the attainment of our freedom and democracy in 1994.

Today we are here to salute the more than 20 000 women who marched to the Union Buildings on 9 August 1956 in protest against the extension of Pass Laws to women.

We say to them wherever they are that they remain our true heroes; they are our true imbokodos of our struggle.

I talk here of women such as Lillian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Albertina Sisulu, Rahima Moosa and Sophia Williams.

These are the women we must continue to honour and celebrate. They have taught us valued lessons about unity and bravery.

It is because of their efforts that we now have the 9th of August as a public holiday.

This year we celebrate our Women's Month under the theme that says: "25 Years of Democracy: Growing South Africa Together for Women's Emancipation".

Part of this theme is about celebrating 25 years of our hard-fought democracy. Through this theme we are also renewing our commitment to growing our country and providing opportunities for the total emancipation of women.

The government is committed to ensuring that women are exposed to opportunities that will enhance the quality of their lives. These include employment opportunities, business opportunities and social opportunities.

This ANC government is committed to the concept of equality between men and women. It is for this reason that we are seen more and more women being deployed as Councillors, Mayors, MECs and Members of Parliament.

In this Province we also have a sufficient number of women as Municipal Managers and Heads of Departments.

I can tell you that wherever they are deployed, women are doing a very good job. It is therefore very important that we should continue to provide necessary support to these women and not seek to pull them down so that they can fail.

While the government is doing very well when it comes to employing women at the higher levels, there is still a challenge with regard to the private sector.

We will continue to work together with the private sector so that the issue of upliftment of women is not only something that happens in government sectors alone.

We want to see more women as COOs and CEOs of private companies, including listed companies.

We want to see women emerging as leaders in the banking sector – we want to see women emerging as leaders in the mining sector.

We want to see women taking up leadership positions in those sectors which have been dominated by men.

We know that women have the capabilities; all they need is opportunities to showcase these capabilities.

Those who still doubt the capabilities of women simply have to wake up and smell the coffee.

In the recent past we have seen women lifting the flag of our Province and of our country very high on the international stage.

The recent and first ever African woman to win the B.E.T award is a young woman from Shirley village here in Vhembe, Sho Madjozi.

We cannot even begin to count the many achievements of yet another equally talented young woman from this Province, Mokgadi Caster Semanya.

Recently, the Executive Mayor of Polokwane was elected as the first-ever female President of the South African Local Government Association.

When Bafana Bafana was struggling to represent us well on the international stage, our women's team, Banyana Banyana went as far as representing us at the FIFA Women's World Cup in France.

Recently, our Banyana Banyana trashed the Comoros 17 – 0 in the COSAFA Challenge.

These are part of the many achievements that women of our country are continuing to record.

The government is also committed to providing support to those women who have elected to go into business.

We are seeing more women making serious waves as entrepreneurs. Most of these women have to navigate difficult terrains of the male-dominated business world.

However, what is impressive is the fact that these women are not giving up; instead, they are showing their male counterparts how best to do things.

As part of providing support to businesses owned by women, our Provincial Government has adopted a policy which guarantees that at least 20% of government procurement should go to businesses owned by women and young people.

Our policy of ensuring the payment of invoices within 30 days will also ensure that these businesses are self sustained and financially viable.

Programme Director;

The truth is that there are still many challenges facing the women of this country and the women of our Province in particular.

Women continue to suffer from physical, emotional and economic abuse. The saddest part is that women mostly suffer in the hands of the very same people who took vows to love, cherish and protect them.

It is regrettable that in this age of our democracy, women are still denied their inherent right to freedom of movement because of violence and abuse.

Violence against women and children in this country has reached unacceptable and monumental levels. This violence includes physical abuse and the rape of women and young girls.

There is no doubt that violence against women has become a serious problem that undermines the constitutional rights of women in our country.

This demon of abuse robs women and children of their inherent right to bodily integrity, dignity and the right to freedom of movement.

In most instances, such violation of women's rights leaves permanent marks of physical and physiological scars. In some instances, women are left with incurable diseases.

No one has a right to use a woman's body as his playground.

We believe that the police and the courts have a greater responsibility to help stop the ongoing incidences of violence and abuse against women and children.

We want to see swift arrest of perpetrators and we want to see longer jail terms for those who are convicted of any form of violence against women and children.

Experience has proved that some perpetrators of violence against women use bail time as an opportunity to go and kill their victims as a way to bury evidence.

We therefore also call on the courts to think carefully when considering bail application for perpetrators of domestic abuse.

We are also tired and impatient with those men who need to be reminded through court orders about their responsibility to support their own children.

Failing to support your own child is the most barbaric form of violence against an innocent child.

No man should be allowed to live comfortable and in luxury when his own children are without proper food, clothing and school fees.

Programme Director;

I want to conclude by remind all women that unity is power. We have seen it with the women of 1956, they confronted and defeated the most hostile and brutal regime in the world.

The challenges you have today requires you to be united and act as one solid force. You will win, because victory is in your DNA.

Through unity, you will win against poverty, unemployment and abuse.

The government is always available to support your efforts and initiatives.

Once again, I want to wish all women of our Province a happy and productive National Women's Day.

Enjoy your day.

Ndo livhuwa

Inkomu

I thank you!