

ADDRESS BY THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO, AMBASSADOR CHUPU MATHABATHA  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE WORLD REMEMBRANCE DAY AND LAUNCH OF  
FESTIVE SEASON, EPHRAIM MOGALE STADIUM, MODIMOLLE.

18 November 2018

Programme Director, MEC Makoma Makhurupetje;  
Minister of Transport, Honourable Blade Nzimande;  
MECs present here today;  
Chairperson of Limpopo House of Traditional Leaders, Kgoshi Malesela Dikgale;  
Executive Mayor of Waterberg District Municipality, Cllr Mories Mataboge;  
Executive Mayor of Modimolle-Mookgophong Municipality, Cllr, Van Staden;  
Our Provincial Commissioner  
National and Provincial Heads of Traffic Units  
Limpopo Tourism Agency CEO  
Leadership of SANTACO;  
Organised Transport representatives  
RAF representatives  
Members of the Media  
Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning!

Let me start by thanking the National Department of Transport for the decision to host this year's National Day of Remembrance for Road Victims in our Province. I guess the reason for this decision is pretty obvious.

In the past few months, our Province has experienced the most horrific accidents on our roads. Most of these accidents happened on this stretch of the N1 from Kranskop to Musina. What is more alarming is the frequency of these accidents. Hardly a day ever passes without a report of a motor vehicle accident on this stretch of the road.

With every day that comes, these accidents are becoming horrific and more terrifying. It is even difficult to look at some of the pictures that come from some of these accidents scenes.

Above everything, the most concerning thing about these accidents is the number of lives we are losing on our roads.

Not so long ago, we lost 27 lives on this very same road after a horrific accident which involved multiple vehicles. Most of the victims were travelling from Bochum in Blouberg to Tembisa in Gauteng.

Their fate left the entire Province reeling with shock.

We were told that the accident was caused by a front wheel tyre burst from a truck which lost control and hit several vehicles including a mini-bus taxi which carried most of the victims.

This accident happened about two weeks after another horrific accident involving a bus which happened just a few kilometres from Polokwane. This accident left 10 people dead and 34 others injured.

Just last week, on this very same road, we had a serious accident which involved four vehicles. This accident claimed five lives including that of a seven month baby. What is more concerning about this accident is the allegation of some criminality which caused the accident.

According to Police reports, the accident happened as a Truck Driver was trying to run away from some men who were trying to rob him.

This level of criminality is not welcome on our roads and should be dealt with in the urgency and seriousness it deserves. I am happy however, that our Police have responded swiftly to these concerns.

The Police have confirmed to us that they have put together a Task Team which involves Highway Patrol to deal with incidents of crime on our Highway.

Programme Director;

It is for this reason that, for us as the people of Limpopo this is not just a day of remembrance – for us this is also a day of prayer and reflections. We have gathered in this stadium to pray for our roads – to pray for our drivers, and to pray for all road users.

We are praying for patience on the road.  
We are praying for tolerance.  
We are praying for the respect of the rules of the road.  
Above all, we are here to pray for our lives.  
We are here to pray against the demon of overloading, and,  
We are here to pray against the demon of over-speeding.

The road safety message can never be out of fashion.

We therefore reiterate our call to all road users to observe the rules of the road. These includes, observing a safe following distance, being patient on the road, observing speed limit and not driving under the influence of alcohol.

Programme Director;

The people of Limpopo will not forgive me if I can fail to reiterate the message to both the Minister and SANRAL. The people of Limpopo are saying that there is an urgent need to look into the possibility of improving the N1 from Kranskop to Musina.

We believe that such an improvement will also contribute to reducing accidents on this road.

I want to conclude my welcome remarks by once again extending our deepest sympathy to the families and relatives of all the road accident victims in our province.

Allow me to leave you with the following words of comfort from the Book of Revelation, Chapter 21 verse 4;

It says, "The Lord will wipe every tear from your eyes. There will be no more death, mourning, crying or pain."

I thank you!