

ADDRESS BY THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO, MR CHUPU STANLEY MATHABATHA ON THE OCCASION OF THE BUSINESS BREAKFAST ORGANIZED BY LIMPOPO UNITED BUSINESS FORUM, HELD IN POLOKWANE.

12 April 2022

Programme Director, Mr. Timothy Marobane;

President of Limpopo United Business Forum, Ms. Tshepo Mathabatha, and your leadership collective;

Executive Mayor for Capricorn District Municipality, Cllr Mamedupi Teffo;

Our generous sponsors;

Esteemed ladies and gentlemen:

It is not always that one gets an invitation to an all-expenses-paid breakfast in such an exquisite facility. It is also a bit rare for an ordinary citizen like me to enjoy breakfast in the company of such accomplished businessmen and businesswomen.

Thank you very much for your generous invitation to this breakfast session. I am truly humbled by your invitation.

When I received your invitation to this session I did desktop research about your organization, the Limpopo United Business Forum.

The one thing that caught my attention with your organization is the fact women are playing an important leadership role, this is not something to take for granted, particularly in a country where women continue to be marginalized.

To have a business leadership organization being led by a female president and a female Secretary General is something that inspires hope for the future.

You are doing far much better than many organizations in our country, including political organizations.

In most of these organizations, women are only allowed to play deputy to their male counterparts.

When women are not deputizing, the only position they ever occupy is that of being a Treasurer.

We congratulate you for moving so many steps ahead of the rest.

The second important thing I have recognized with your organization is your progressive outlook.

I am particularly inspired by your commitment to transformation.

It is therefore not surprising that progressive organization such as NAFCOOC, the Progressive Professionals Forum, the South African Women in Construction and other community-based business organizations are happy to associate with you.

The one thing I would say to you is that you must never be shy to associate yourself with organizations that shares your progressive outlook.

You must never be apologetic about being a pro-black business organization.

You must never think that there is anything wrong with the concept of Affirmative Action.

I am saying this because of the many attacks which have been levelled against our affirmative action policies, including BEE.

It is only those who pretend like apartheid never existed who think that affirmative action is inherently wrong.

As a matter of fact, apartheid itself was a form of affirmative action. What made apartheid deplorable and immoral is the fact that it was only affirming the minority of the minority.

Apartheid, as a policy introduced in the late 1940s was designed to uplift White people, in particular our Afrikaner counterparts.

An overwhelming majority of South Africans could not participate in meaningful business prior to 1994.

The laws of the time purposefully excluded Africans from government procurement,

Government funding for business support was exclusively reserved for white businessmen.

The government of the day went as far as buying farms and other strategic assets for white Afrikaner men, while excluding the majority of the African population.

If anything, our crime as this ANC government is that we have been somehow apologetic about issues of transformation.

The fight against our affirmative action policies is a desperate fight by those who benefited from apartheid crimes to retain control of their illegitimate gains.

The fight against our affirmative action policies is a fight against the spirit of sharing.

It is a fight against transformation and Black upliftment.

I always use the metaphor of a race to describe the unfairness of the cries against affirmative action.

Insisting on scrapping affirmative action whilst the inherited inequalities of apartheid are still haunting the Black majority is evil enough.

You cannot insist on running a marathon with someone who is still thousands of kilometers away from the starting line, whilst you have already been transported a few meters away from the finish line.

We agree that affirmative action policies will some day have to end, however, the pre-condition for that is that conditions of equity and equality should first exist.

This means we should first use the power of policy and legislation to end inequality, end black poverty and end black unemployment.

The challenge for our white counterparts is to embrace affirmative action so that our country can move faster to our defined destination of equity, equality and prosperity for all.

South Africa cannot afford to remain an oasis of luxury for the few while the majority are languishing in a desert of poverty.

Programme Director

The government I lead, support your organization and its programme of action without qualification. We want to see you succeed with the objectives you have set for yourselves.

We know that your success means the redistribution of wealth. Your success would mean we are moving closer to ending the indignity that poverty has imposed on black people.

We want to see real capital circulating amongst black people. You must support each other and never seek to destroy each other.

I am happy to see part of your objectives as being the support to SMMEs and cooperatives.

There are many people who want to be where you are but lack the necessary experience and knowledge – you must always be available to lend a helping hand.

The African saying '**motho ke motho ka batho**', remain true today as it was true million years ago when our forebears conceptualized it. Indeed, no man is an island.

I need to repeat this clarion call, I ask you to be available at all times to help the previously marginalized and the poor.

In your organisation I see a new, vibrant and viable vehicle that will result in the creation of the much needed black industrialists.

Based on our province's comparative advantage in mining, agriculture and tourism, I see a Limpopo that we all want.

As I always say, government require partnerships with the private sector like yourselves in order to move Limpopo forward.

Programme Director

For the Limpopo Development Plan to move from paper to the actual deliverables on the ground, we need public private partnerships.

The people of Limpopo are looking upon this leadership collective which has gathered here today, for the solutions to their challenges.

The socio-economic development as envisaged in our Economic Recovery Plan, is a collective and meaningful program of action to troubleshoot existing challenges.

Emerging from the economic devastation caused by Covid-19 pandemic and the 2008 global economic meltdown, we need each other now more than ever.

I urge all of you gathered here and across to embrace the founding principles of the Freedom Charter.

This is because, thus far we are quaranteed of political power, however, our people are yearning for economic emancipation.

Working together, united in one voice with a shared vision of a development oriented Limpopo we can indeed conquer.

Business organizations such as yours are very relevant to the current struggle of socio-economic emancipation.

Programme Director

As I conclude, I want to once again reiterate the support of this ANC government to your organization.

Our doors remain open.

We are also not oblivious to the challenges you face as business people, particularly as Black business people.

We also are aware that most of your challenges have been compounded by the restrictions that came with the Covid-19 pandemic.

We are available to work with you as you try to recover.

We must work together to take our economy and our businesses to pre-Covid-19 stability and to even greater heights.

I once again want to appreciate your invitation to this breakfast.

I hope that we will soon do lunch and dinner in the future.

May the spirit of our liberation heroes and heroines guide us towards a triumphant Limpopo.

I thank you!

Inkomu!

Ndaa!

Kea Leboga!