

OPENING ADDRESS BY LIMPOPO PREMIER HON. CHUPU STANLEY  
MATHABATHA ON THE OCCASION OF EXCO LEKGOTLA HELD VIRTUAL

17H FEBRUARY 2021

Chairperson of the Session

Honourable Members of the Executive Council present here;

Your Worship Executive Mayors of our Municipalities who have logged on;

The Director General and HOD's of our Departments present here;

Heads of our parastatals;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Chairperson of the Session

Today's EXCO Lekgotla is held following the successful Cabinet Lekgotla which took place on the 28th January 2021. The January 2021 Cabinet Lekgotla, was held as an honest assessment platform in dealing with challenges faced by the people of our country and also to provide guidance on the future trajectory.

Cabinet Lekgotla as it is commonly known, was further imperative as a predecessor towards the State of the Nation Address, which was unleashed by President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa on the 11th February 2021`.

Chairperson of the Session

Having gathered here today, we are highly motivated by the high levels of hope which President Ramaphosa inspired in us amidst the scourge of Covid-19 that we are currently grappling with.

Indeed, today we are better persons than we were in 2020 during the hard lockdown. Once again, we rally our support behind all the marching orders as outlined by President Ramaphosa during SONA.

It is therefore worth noting that, in our high spirits as we collectively march for a better tomorrow, our country and our province is still grappling with the detrimental effects of Covid-19. The second surge as it is commonly known, has hit us so hard that, in one voice no one is ready for the third resurgence.

We are saying the above words very much aware that as Limpopo, we are counted among the few provinces in our country, which managed coronavirus well. However, the destruction of our economy, lives and livelihood, will take ages to amend.

Like we said during our last EXCO engagement, we continue to appreciate the collective efforts by members of this EXCO, Traditional Leaders, Faith-based Organizations, Civil Society Groups and all the people of Limpopo, who together have journey throughout the hard lockdown and all its restrictions.

We are grateful for having emerged victorious during this difficult period and our plea is that, let us journey far too long together, the battle is not yet over.

Programme Director

Having said the above, please allow me to extend our deepest condolences to MEC Mavhungu Lerule-Ramakhanya following the passing on of her husband, Dr Happy Ramakhanya. I therefore request that all of us observe a moment of silence in the memory of our departed soul.

Once more, condolences to the family of MEC Ramakhanya, relatives, friends and colleagues. May his soul rest in peace. On the same wavelength, EXCO extends its heartfelt condolences to all the families which have lost their loved ones during this difficult times.

Chairperson of the Session

One of the many critical reasons why we have gathered here today, is to engage robustly on the mandate of government, during this financial year, particularly following SONA.

President Ramaphosa has mandated us to work towards the attainment of the following four key priority areas. They are:  
Firstly, defeating coronavirus pandemic;  
Number two, accelerating economic recovery;  
Number three, implementing economic reforms to create jobs and drive inclusive growth;  
Number 4, fighting corruption and strengthen the state.  
What this Lekgotla is tasked to do is to therefore make honest assessment of the current state of affairs in our province and set out enablers to achieve the four key priorities of government as stipulated above.

Programme Director

The Lekgotla today is held when all of us are well aware of the socio-economic destruction caused by Covid-19. Therefore, to remind administration that it is our implementing agents, while we drive policy direction will be an understatement. My clarion call, which has the support of the ruling ANC, flowing from our recent PEC Lekgotla is that, we have talked far too much. As the ruling party, we are now demanding implementation of all the major infrastructure projects and the catalytic projects that we have always spoken about.

For far too long we have been speaking, now is the time for action. This Lekgotla declares Limpopo as a hub for business unusual. The mandate for economic recovery and inclusive growth is a must for all of us.

The character of the administration in sustaining our achievements on clean administration, credible financials and capable administration towards the delivery of quality of basic services will be safeguarded.

We are also mandate to internalize the deliverables of the Back to Basic approach. Ours has always been caring about our people and serving them with love and passion. This Lekgotla must ensure that everybody benefitting from the public budget, internalize this and acts accordingly.

In addition to the above, as we march together out of the shackles of Covid-19, this Lekgotla must resolve that the Khaweleza Model, dubbed the One District One Plan Model, is never forgotten. Ours is forward looking approach.  
Chairperson of the Session

Please allow me to appreciate efforts of national government with regard to acquisition of the Covid-19 Vaccine. The latest being that 80 000 doses of Johnson and Johnson Vaccine have already arrived in our country. We wish that all the plans of national government will unfold as planned so that more and more doses will be acquired. As Limpopo, we are combat ready to rollout the vaccination program as we have said.

Programme Director

While still on these, we are calling on the provincial department of education to act swiftly in resolving the challenges of the plus minus 3 000 learners, who have not yet been admitted at schools.

We know fully well that education remains our apex priority and we can not fold our arms while some learners are still not learning. To the MEC and the rest of her team, we know that the challenges you face are enormous, however, we have full confidence in your abilities to overcome them.

Chairperson

One of the current challenges we are facing as a province is the aftermath of hurricane Eloise. While we appreciate the hood rains that came as a result, we cannot shy away from disturbing reports about destruction of roads, bridges and households in some parts of the province.

We call upon our disaster management teams to expedite efforts to assist all our people in distress. We can comfortably continue with our day to day business when we know fully well that our people need help.

In addition, our municipalities must step up their relieve efforts towards resolving the challenges faced by our communities following these heavy rains.

On the very same note, we continue to sympathize with all the families who have lost their loved ones due to these heavy rains. May the souls of all the departed rest in peace.

While still on that, we wish to extend our special condolences to the family and friends of the late Kgosi Sekhukhune of Ga-Motodi village in Fetakgomo Tubatse Local Municipality, who passed on few weeks ago.

This week again, we have learned with shock about the passing away of Kgosi Mokgoma Matlala of Matlala Rakgoadi Traditional Authority. Our heartfelt condolences to his family, relatives and Bakone ba Rakgoadi.

Chairperson of the Session

I will not take much of your important time giving a lecture about what need to be done. This is because I am confident that everybody who attended this Lekgotla, know what they represent.

It is therefore befitting for me to wish you a robust, honest, progressive and most of all outcome based session as opposed to output based session. Our people all over the province are looking upon this collective for solutions to their challenges and therefore, engaging on targets which do not impact on the lives of our people is a waste of time.

I am calling for Outcome based approach for this session and nothing more. Please feel free to engage knowing fully well that time for talk shops is over. Now more than ever, is the time for implementation of life touching projects and not projects that benefit few individuals?

Our people want coronavirus to end;  
Our people want roads;  
Our people want water;  
Our people want jobs;  
Our people want quality education;  
Our people want electricity;  
Our people want all of us as a collective to serve them.  
Ours is to respond positively to their call.

With those few words, I Thank You All!!!