

RESPONSE TO THE DEBATE ON THE STATE OF THE PROVINCE ADDRESS BY THE  
PREMIER OF LIMPOPO, AMBASSADOR CHUPU MATHABATHA, HELD AT  
LEBOWAKGOMO LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER.

05 March 2020

Madam Speaker;  
Deputy Speaker;  
Members of the Executive Council,  
Leader of the Official Opposition;  
Chief-Whip of the Majority Party;  
Leaders of Political Parties;  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me take this opportunity to thank all Members of this august House who participated in the debate on the State of the Province Address on Tuesday.

As expected, the debate on Tuesday was intense and robust.

As the Premier I always come to this House with the knowledge that this Legislature is an important instrument of our people to advance and deepen democracy.

In a constitutional democracy like ours, the Legislature plays a very important role. The members of Legislature are elected to represent the people of this Province. You are here to act as the voice of the people. All of us are first and foremost account-able to the people of Limpopo.

We first must be loyal to the people, before we can even be loyal to our different political parties.

We should therefore support everything that advances the interest of our people and oppose anything that threatens the interest of our people.

As the democratically elected representatives of the people, we have an honourable task to ensure that the government works in the interest of the people.

It is for this reason that we value all the contributions made in this House.

As I have already indicated, your debates were indeed very vibrant, robust and truly enriching. This will go a long way in strengthening the efficiency and effectiveness of our government.

Madam Speaker;

On Tuesday when we were busy in this chamber engaging with the State of the Province Address, Statistics South Africa was announcing that our economy had contracted by 1.4% in the 4th quarter of 2019.

This meant that South Africa's economy only grew 0.2% in 2019. This was our economy's worst performance since the global financial crisis in 2008.

This means that our economy is now in technical recession.

The reality is that this gloomy economic outlook will to a greater extent impact on our development objectives.

This means that the bold plans we announced during the State of the Province Address will now have to be implemented within an environment of negative economic growth.

I think it was Honourable Selamolela who reminded us that economy is a multi-layered and multifaceted phenomenon whose performance is a subject of multiple variables.

This is a reality we must all embrace and learn to navigate within.

We have said before that we have to master the art of doing more with less. This is the only viable alternative at our disposal.

The time for luxuries is over. The time for wastage is no more.

Honourable Members;

This unfavorable economic outlook calls on us to redouble our efforts and work together in implementing the measures we have outlined last week Thursday.

As you remember, these measures include; the Musina-Makhado SEZ, the proposed Tubatse SEZ, the revitalisation of the Industrial Parks, agricultural and several mining initiatives.

We are agreeing with the sentiments from this House that we need to move with necessary speed to ensure the implementation of these major catalytic projects.

I have instructed the MEC for LEDET to ensure that he unblocks whatever impediments, including the finalization of EIAs on the Musina-Makhado Special Economic Zone.

We want to see all the investment commitment to that project being turned into tangible and implementable projects.

Madam Speaker;

Indeed we agree that the urgent and extraordinary measures are required to deal with the levels of violence in our communities, particularly violence against women and children.

As I have said during SOPA, we can no longer afford to keep an audible silence when women and children are being killed like flies.

We have also noticed that those who have been forgiven by society through the parole system seem to be on rampage, maiming and slaughtering women and innocent children. A response to this challenge has to be multifaceted.

We need the community to come on board. We also need the law to come to the party. It is for this reason that I think as this House we should adopt a special resolution urging the national parliament to urgently review our parole laws.

We can't even begin to count the number of women and children who lost their lives in the hands of people who are out on parole.

We will indeed be failing the most vulnerable in our society if we don't act now.

Madam Speaker;

Our commitment to fighting corruption and maladministration has nothing to do with grandstanding or mere political point scoring.

We are fighting corruption because corruption attacks the foundation of democratic institutions. Corruption is bad for our country. Corruption undermines the confidence of investors into our economy. Corruption therefore impedes our developmental objectives.

I want to respond to the allegations that we have not acted against allegations of corruption in the public service. A specific reference was about the issue of sale of land in Tubatse and the recommendations of the Public Protector against former MEC Mokaba-Phukwana and HOD Du Plessis.

With regard to the Tubatse matter, following the findings of the AG, we instituted a forensic investigation into the allegations.

The officials who were implicated in the transaction were;  
Makoko MG who was at the time the Acting HOD for the Department;  
Setati N, Acting Chief Financial Officer;  
Mathunye MS who was the Chief Director in the Department  
Monama GR who was the Acting DDG, and  
Matemotsa MB who was the Director for Legal Services.

The investigation exonerated all these officials. No one was found to have committed any fraud or corruption in relation to the transaction. Over and above this, the report found that the land acquisition process was facilitated by the Housing Development Agency and no fault could be attributed to the officials in question.

I have accordingly directed the MEC for CoGHSTA to make the report public within two weeks from now.

Madam Speaker;

As it relates to the recommendations of the Public Protector against the former MEC Mokaba-Phukwana and HOD Du Plessis, the facts are as follows;  
Both the HOD and former MEC took the Public Protector's report on judicial review.  
Before then I had initiated processes to implement the Public Protector's recommendations against both of them.

As Honourable Members know, the review process meant that we could not proceed with the implementation of the recommendations.

This is what the rule of law requires Honourable Phuthane. The rule of law requires that the decisions of the court should not be made nugatory.

Since then, the High Court had set the Public Protector's recommendations against HOD Du Plisses aside.

The court found that the remedial action imposed by the Public Protector unlawful.  
Had we insisted on action against the HOD even when there was review process pending we would most probably have acted unfairly against the HOD.

It is a good thing that we respected the court processes.  
With regard to former the MEC Mokaba-Phukwane, the review process is still pending in court. The matter is therefore sub- judice. The matter is under judicial consideration and it would therefore be wise that we allow the judicial processes to unfold without hindrance or interference.

It will also be unfair on the former MEC for us or anyone to disregard the pending review process and engage with the matter as if it is not pending in court. Not unless it is just for political-point scoring purpose  
Please, let us respect the rule of law in practice, and not just in words.

Madam Speaker;

I do not doubt the commitment of all the Members of this House to work with us in the Executive to changing the lives of the people of this Province.

I am convinced that without regard to the fact that we may be coming from different backgrounds and persuasions, we all want the best for Limpopo and its people.

We can only achieve these noble objectives, if we work together in unity.

As I always say, let us master the art to subject our personal ambitions and aspirations to the broader ambitions of the people as a whole.

Together, in unity, we can renew our efforts to create much needed jobs for our people.

Let us work together to build more houses for our people;

Let us work together to build more schools, more hospitals and clinics.

Let us work together to build new roads and rehabilitated our existing infrastructure.

Working together, we can connect more houses to the electricity grid.

Working together we can improve our pace of delivery of decent sanitation facilities for our people.

To repeat what I said during SOPA last week,

We will not betray our commitment to the people of Limpopo. We will traverse this journey towards our promised land, the land of the dreams and aspirations of the Freedom Charter.

We will marshal every effort, skill and commitment towards the task of growing the economy and creating the much-needed jobs for our people;

We will not rest for as long as women and children are not free to walk our streets because of the demon of Gender-Based-Violence;

We will not rest until the fight against alcohol and substance abuse is won;

We will not tire from the task of building a capable state that serves all our people;

I thank you!