

**ADDRESS BY THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO, AMBASSADOR
CHUPU MATHABATHA ON THE OCCASION OF THE
PROVINCIAL YOUTH DAY CELEBRATIONS, HELD AT THE OLD
PETER MOKABA STADIUM, POLOKWANE MUNICIPALITY.**

16 June 2018

Programme director; MEC Onicca Moloi.
Members of the Executive Council;
Our host District Executive mayor, Cllr John Mpe;
Our host local Executive Mayor, Cllr Thembi Nkadimeng;
Other Executive Mayors and local mayors present here;
Our councillors;
Leaders of various political parties;
Our traditional leaders;
Leaders of our various youth formations;
Our friends in the media;

I greet you all in the name of youth development.
We greet you in the name of accessible quality education for the youth;
We greet you in the name of improved training opportunities and skills development for all our young people;
We greet you in the name of improved access to better healthcare services for all our young people.
We extend our warmest greetings to all of you, in the name of quality jobs, for young people.

We are also here to celebrate the living legacy of former President Nelson Mandela with a commitment to move towards the socio-economic empowerment of our youth.

You would know that 2018 has been declared the year of President Nelson Mandela.

President Mandela himself was an architect and pioneer for youth development.

In his own words, President Mandela has said that the youth of today

are the leaders of tomorrow.

President Mandela went on to say that **young people are capable, when aroused, of bringing down the towers of oppression and raising the banners of freedom.**

Perhaps, the most relevant message to you from President Mandela can be found in a letter he wrote to his late son, Makgatho Mandela. In a letter written in 1969 to the then young Makgatho Mandela, President Nelson Mandela said the following words of advice:

“Remember that we live in a new age of scientific achievement, ...the younger generation must train and prepare themselves so that they can easily grasp the far-reaching repercussions of developments in the realm of space.

This is an era of intense and vicious competition in which the richest rewards are reserved for those who have undergone the most thorough training...

...the issues that agitate humanity today call for trained minds and the man who is deficient in this respect is crippled because he is not in possession of the tools and equipment necessary to ensure success and victory in the service of the people”.

I think we would all agree that President Mandela’s words are as spot on today, as they were in 1969. They are as relevant to you, as this generation of young people, as they were to the generation of Makgatho Mandela.

As this ANC government we remain prepared to cultivate a supportive environment for you as young people to be educated, trained, and to be equipped with necessary skills for your own development.

It is for this reason that as the government of Limpopo we have adopted the first-ever comprehensive Youth Development Strategy.

As you would know, the adoption of this Strategy followed a province wide consultation process.

The Strategy focuses on areas such as, youth participation in the economy and job market, youth education and skills development, youth health, and the project of nation-building and social cohesion.

I have directed all MECs and all mayors to ensure that they put practical measures and support to ensure the realisation of the aspirations contained in this Strategy. This include, putting aside adequate financial resources to support youth development in the province.

Programme Director;

We agree with President Mandela that the socio-economic challenges of today require well trained minds.

Indeed we cannot even begin to tackle the challenges facing our society without well educated and trained minds.

It is for this reason that your government is investing so much in your education and training.

You would remember that the generation of 1976 fought fearlessly for a transformed education system, particularly, against the imposition of a medium of instruction.

Your generation also fought a brave and fruitful battle for access to a free tertiary education.

Today we can celebrate the fact that, NSFAS is funding more than 405,000 students from a budget of over R10 billion. This is a massive achievement considering where we come from.

NSFAS is also funding over 200 000 students in the TVET sector in line with our country' skills revolution.

To add on this, government continues with other targeted funding schemes such as the **Funza Lushaka** Bursary which is aimed at promoting access to the teaching profession by our young people.

The 1976 struggle and your recent struggle for free education would be in vain if you do not take education seriously.

Programme Director;

As a Provincial Government, we continue to support the idea of improved access to quality education through the implementation of progressive policies such as, the No-Fee-School Policy, the National School Nutrition Programme and the Scholar Transport Policy.

This year in Limpopo alone, 41 459 more learners will benefit from this No-Fee-School policy. This will take the overall number of

benefitting children to almost 1.7 million learners.

The School Nutrition Programme also plays an important role in ensuring the improvement of learner attendance and contributing towards effective learning.

This year, almost 3 800 schools will benefit from the provisioning of meals as per the National Schools Nutrition Programme.

The Scholar Transport Programme has been expanded to cover learners from 380 schools from across the province.

Ours is without a doubt a youth-friendly government.

Programme Director;

Indeed, it is only education that will position you well to grab the opportunities that accrue from the government's efforts to grow and transform the economy.

The conclusion of the current debate and parliamentary processes about the transformation of land ownership should find you well prepared to grab the opportunities.

We want to see an avalanche of Black, youth farmers. We are talking about Black youth farmers who are equipped with the scientific knowledge of modern farming techniques.

Programme Director;

Last year alone we have placed over 2 300 young people on internship and Learnership programmes across various government departments. This was supplemented by over 1 700 young people who were placed on experiential learning programme across 12 government departments.

This has helped to equip them with the necessary experience required by the job market. The good news is that a significant number of these young people have since been absorbed permanently by both the government and the private sector.

Through the support of Construction SETA (CETA), we have used an amount of R17 million to train hundreds of young people in

artisanship.

Through a partnership with Manufacturing and Engineering SETA (MerSETA), we have set aside an amount of almost R20 million to provide technical skills training to hundreds of young people from across the province.

The struggle for radical socio-economic transformation itself requires educated minds.

The demands of the fourth industrial revolution challenge you as young people to equip yourselves with necessary skills for the opportunities that are brought about by this technological revolution. Last year I announced that Limpopo Connexion, which is a subsidiary of LEDA, was to begin with a rollout of broadband infrastructure across the Province.

Today I am able to report to you as young people of this province that the first phase of the rollout of the broadband telecommunication network infrastructure has commenced. The construction of the data centre, which is the provincial ICT nerve centre, has already been completed.

The broadband technology will provide a unique opportunity for you as young people of Limpopo to become active participants in the knowledge economy.

You would have heard that we have recently secured a \$10 billion investment to our Musina-Makhado Special Economic Zone (SEZ). The SEZ itself carries lot of opportunities for you as young people. The Musina-Makhado SEZ is projected to create about 20 800 direct jobs.

Most of these jobs are expected to go to you as young people. However, without education and proper skills, you will not be able to grab this opportunity.

In this regard, I am able to announce that we have finalised the Skills Development Plan which would assist to capacitate the young people of this province to be able to seize the opportunities availed by this SEZ initiative.

The recently adopted Limpopo Procurement Strategy will also go a long way in supporting the participation of young people in the provincial economy.

This Procurement Strategy has set aside minimum targets for the benefit of young people in all government procurement. The Strategy is also biased to young people living with disabilities.

Our guiding philosophy is that young people must be assisted to become active participant in the economy. It is for this reason that institutions such as LEDA have tailored special programmes to assist youth owned businesses.

We also call on our municipalities to adopt such initiatives which are aimed at assisting and supporting youth owned businesses.

Programme Director;

This government support the idea that young people must participate in leadership and governance structures across all levels of society.

We must support youth leadership because that is the future of our province and the future of our country.

As young people you must be in the forefront of providing leadership to your communities.

You must be the ones who stand up and say no to dreadful episodes of women and children abuse.

You must be the ones saying no to the destruction of private and public property during community protest.

You should also add voice roaring voices against the increasing incidences of violence at our schools.

Organisations such as COSAS should partner with school leadership and other stakeholders to eliminate violence from our schools, including violence against learners.

As young people you should be the ones raising your voices against drug peddlers and drug mules that are destroying the dreams of our

young people.

Our young people are being crippled by the twin demons of drug and alcohol abuse.

It is heart-breaking to see young people being enslaved by drugs and alcohol.

Drugs will isolate you from your loved ones and introduce you to new and strange friends.

The most painful part is that these drugs have now found their way into our schools, including primary schools.

I challenge all young people gathered here, together with your various formations, to organise yourselves and get rid of drugs and drug pushers from our streets.

You must educate your peers about the dangers of drugs and alcohol abuse.

You must also report those who push these drugs in your communities and street corners.

It is a known fact that the twin evils of drugs and alcohol abuse are responsible for violent crimes in our communities, including the rape of women and children.

Related to this is the issue of your lifestyle as young people.

Part of what is expected from you today, is for you to pursue a healthy life style. This includes safe sex to protect yourselves from the many sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV and AIDS.

You must never let the beautiful flame of your potential to be extinguished by reckless life style.

As young people, you must not postpone your leadership role for tomorrow, you must provide leadership now. Nelson Mandela provided leadership at a very young age, so did Oliver Tambo, Mama Albertina Sisulu and all great leaders you know.

Part of this leadership responsibility is that you must use the power of sport and your artistic abilities to unite our nation and foster social cohesion.

Conclusion;

Programme Director; let me once again take this opportunity to wish our young people a happy and rewarding National Youth Day. Please celebrate with responsibility and remember that you still have tomorrow and many more days ahead of you.
I thank you.