

WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO MR. CHUPU MATHABATHA ON
THE OCCASION OF THE LIMPOPO ECONOMIC SUMMIT, THE RANCH HOTEL,
POLOKWANE

04 November 2016

Programme director;
Deputy President, Hon. Cyril Ramaphosa;
Minister for Economic Development, Hon. Ebrahim Patel;
MEC for Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, Ntate Seaparo Sekoati;
Other MECs present;
Acting Director General, Ntate Nape Nchabeleng;
Representatives of labour and business;
Invited guests; and
Distinguished ladies and Gentlemen;

The Limpopo Provincial Economic Summit is convened under the theme 'an industrialisation path towards creating sustainable jobs and poverty reduction for Limpopo Province' – this summit gives us a platform to breathe life to the vision of the Limpopo Development Plan (LDP).

The theme for this summit loudly communicates a message that the yearning to create jobs, eliminate poverty and reduce inequality is umbilically tied to the urgency of an industrialisation path.

This summit is convened with the appreciation of the fact that our socio-economic problems are inherited and runs deep.

Most importantly, this summit evidences our commitment to craft lasting solutions to both the problems inherited from our past and those that are imposed on us the global economic environment.

This Limpopo Provincial Economic Summit is preceded by a Medium Term Budget Policy Statement which was presented under a very hostile domestic and international economic climate.

In presenting the Medium Term Budget Minister Pravin Gordhan remarked as follows:

World economics and politics are in a state of flux, marked by high levels of uncertainty. Anaemic growth and investment, in tandem with a widening trust deficit between ordinary people and elites, have brought global inequality into sharper focus.

The National Development Plan, our roadmap to rid South Africa of poverty and fight inequality, targets growth of 5.4 per cent but the real GDP growth has slowed

markedly, and the economy is now expected to record growth of just 0.5 per cent this year.

The reality of the economic climate that Minister Gordhan spoke about impact on our provincial economic development goals, in particular, those goals that are encapsulated in our Limpopo Development Plan, the LDP.

As you would know by now, the LDP is our development master-plan which reflects our yearning to reduce poverty, eliminate of social inequality and create sustainable jobs for our people.

We aim to achieve this through sustainable socio-economic, infrastructural and institutional development.

The essence of the LDP is to assist the province in the quest to achieve radical economic and social transformation.

With regard to economic development and transformation, we identified strategic programmes across the mining, agriculture and tourism sectors.

Our fundamental goal is to ensure an industrialisation programme through mineral beneficiation, development of agro-processing cluster and logistics.

In addition, we have re-affirmed the role of SMME's and Cooperatives in the productive sectors as a critical component towards radical economic transformation.

Programme Director;

The Limpopo Development Plan has also identified specific economic regions that have a significant potential to accelerate the industrialisation process in the Province.

These include, but not limited to Polokwane, Lephalale, Tubatse, Tzaneen and Makhado-Musina corridor as the areas of priority in terms of integrated human settlements and economic development.

Already we can confirm that there are already a significant number of economic projects and infrastructure investments that are being implemented in some of these economic regions.

These projects include the Presidential Strategic Infrastructure Programme targeting both Waterberg and Sekhukhune District Municipalities, and the envisaged Special Economic Zones earmarked for implementation in both Greater Tubatse and Musina Local Municipalities.

The Limpopo Development Plan appreciates the fact that for us as government to realise our developmental objectives, we need to craft strategic partnerships with the private sector and other institutions such as our academic institutions.

Programme Director;

The task before this summit is a big one, yet, we cannot avoid it.

As Minister Gordhan puts it, we need to strengthen active collaboration with business and labour to revive investment growth, and provide greater policy certainty and improve labour relations.

Indeed, what we need most right now is faster, inclusive, job-creating growth. That is the task before all of us here today.

It is for this reason that we have crafted the programme for this summit in such a way that it will assist to respond to the challenges identified by both Minister Gordhan and our own Provincial Development Plan.

We have invited you to this summit so that you can help guide our to the work that we must do in the mining sector; the work that we must do with regard to the development of our social infrastructure and the work that need to go into our efforts to industrialise our economy.

This summit must also speak to what need to be done with regard to agro-processing, ICT and the knowledge economy, and the support that we need to give to our SMMEs and cooperatives.

It is clear that we cannot afford to take the work of this summit for granted. Our people rely on us to craft solutions to the socio-economic challenges they encounter on daily basis – we should not betray their expectations.

Programme Director;

My task was merely to welcome everyone to this important summit. I am confident that this summit will be able to come with an implementation plan for our Provincial Development Plan.

I wish you robust and fruitful deliberation, and a successful summit.

Once again, you are most welcome to this Limpopo Provincial Economic Summit.

I thank you!