

## **ADDRESS BY THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO, CHUPU MATHABATHA ON THE OCCASION OF THE PROVINCIAL POLICE DAY HELD AT PETER MOKABA STADIUM**

03 February 2016

Programme Director;  
Our Chaplain, Chaplain Mabe;  
Our MEC for Transport, safety, security and liaison, Mme Mapula  
Mokaba-Phukwane;  
Provincial Police Commissioner, Lieutenant General Masemola;  
Deputy Provincial Commissioner, Major General Mashilo;  
Our hard-working and much loved men and women in blue;  
Representatives of our Police Unions  
Members of the media;  
Invited guests, ladies and gentlemen:

Let me start first by extending my appreciations to the MEC, the Provincial Commissioner and the entire leadership of the police in the province for having set aside this day to celebrate our police.

Put differently; on this day, we remember the sacrifices that our men and women in blue have made and continue to make as they provide safety for all who live in South Africa

As per custom, an event of this nature is also used to commemorate and honour those who died in the line of duty; the real servants of the people who died with their boots on.

Chapter 12 of the National Development Plan opens with a utopian statement that that says:

***“In our well designed community surrounding we feel safe everywhere, each community has a police station with respected and upright police...the law enables us to live together fulfilling our mutual obligations and responsibilities”***

The bone marrow of this statement is that it is part of human nature to want to feel safe and secured;

... that police men and women are important role players in bringing about a feeling of safety and security;  
... that the police need to win the trust of the community, and  
..., lastly that, the laws of the land need to support the idea of safety and security for all.

This is how important the idea of safety and security is for our communities; in fact, the NDP goes further to say that:

***“Safety is a core human right. It is a necessary condition for human development, improving quality of life and enhancing productivity. When communities do not feel safe and live in fear, the country’s economic development and the people’s wellbeing is affected, hindering their ability to achieve their potential”***

What we need to achieve on matters of safety and security in terms of the NDP and our Provincial Development plan is a situation where our residents feel safe and have no fear of crime.

Our people need to be safe at home, at work, and to generally enjoy community life free of fear.

Women should be able to walk freely in our streets while children can play safely outside.

### **Programme director, and the Provincial Commissioner;**

Now the important question for us as South Africans is whether we can achieve a safer society, free of crime and the fear of crime without our policemen and women.

I want to say today that a society that does not respect its policemen and women does not deserve its own safety and security.

If these rampant police killings continue to be accepted as normal, so will be our own insecurity.

We cannot continue with this dreadful pattern of killing our own protectors and still yearn to be safe and secure in our homes, schools and work places.

In this province we must accept the simple logic, that the death of one police officer means that hundreds of citizens become vulnerable to crime.

As a society we must chose today if we will continue massaging criminals at the expense of our police men and women.

The senseless and brutal killing of Warrant Officer Boshego Joel Seloga in Jane Furse a week ago brings pain that I cannot bear.

From where we are, there is simply no justification this killing. What we know is that once again the people of South Africa have been robbed of yet another dedicated policeman whose only crime was to stop crime.

Your leaders have correctly said that you must never die with your weapons in hand. You simply cannot and must never be seen running away from criminals.

... and I want to appeal to members our communities to choose police over criminals. If we do the opposite, and chose criminals over our police we will be choosing a life of fear and insecurity over our peace and security.

We have extended our message of condolences to the family of Warrant Officer Seloga – we also wish to commend the police who acted swiftly to arrest the perpetrators of this heinous crime.

We know that this is not just an isolated incident; our police men and women are generally under siege. The police must therefore return the siege to criminals.

Criminals must run and not the other way around. We have seen enough of officers' blood colouring the beautiful blue uniform to red.

**MEC and Provincial Commissioner;**

I will be doing an injustice if I do not mention the responsibility of these men and women in blue towards their own safety.

The unfriendly truth is that if you befriend criminal and engage in related activities such as taking bribes, you are endangering your life and the lives of your colleagues.

You must never collude with criminals. You must never take bribes. The NDP requires that yours be a professional institution staffed by highly skilled officers who value their work, serve the community, and safeguard lives and property without discrimination.

At all times you must be above reproach.

As the NDP says, you must conduct yourselves in a way that upholds the integrity of the police service. We want you to be knowledgeable about the law and your roles;

We want you to carry your functions competently and understand your responsibilities to serve our communities. This is the only way you can earn the respect and support of the people you serve.

### **Programme Director;**

As I drive towards my conclusion, let me say that whereas the killings of your colleagues and at times the unfriendly working conditions may have a demoralising effect on you, you must always remember that yours is a calling of a special type.

You must also remember that an overwhelming number of South Africans love you and appreciate the work you do on behalf of all of us. Without you there won't be economy to talk about, everything we own as a nation will fall on to the hands of criminal gangs.

Without you there won't be a criminal justice system to talk about, the courts will simply have no one to try because no one will be doing the all important but difficult job of arresting criminals.

As a matter of fact, there won't be any democracy without you. It is for this reason that we will be relying on you to work together with the IEC and other agencies and assist to deliver free and fair local government elections.

We are alive to your grievances; we will continue the partnership with your unions in a way to improve on your working conditions and other demands.

This government values your work, and the people of South Africa love you.

I thank you!