

WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO, MR CHUPU MATHABATHA
ON THE OCCASION OF THE FUNERAL SERVICE OF THE LATE LESIBA ISAAC
MAPHOTO, HELD AT THE POLOKWANE CRICKET CLUB.

21 JULY 2019

Programme Directors

Members of the bereaved Maphoto family;

His Excellency, President of the Republic of South Africa, and the Commander In chief
of our armed forces, Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa;

Representatives of the Government of Zimbabwe, and the contemporaries of Bra Ike in
the Wankie Spolilo operation,

Our traditional leaders;

Speaker and Members of our Provincial Legislature;

Ministers and Deputy Ministers present here;

Premiers present here

Members of the Executive Council

MPs and MPLs;

Leadership of the ANC;

Leadership of the ANC Veterans League and the MKMVA;

Members of the Media,

Comrades, friends and compatriots:

I am honoured to welcome mourners from both home and afar to this hallowed occasion
of the final farewell of Lesiba Isaac Maphoto, known to most of us simply as Bra Ike.
We are indeed here to bid a befitting farewell to a mogale wa bagale – sebata sa
marumo, a hero of heroes; General Ike Maphoto.

I want to start by thanking you Honourable President for your decision to accord Bra Ike
a Special Official Funeral, category 1.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank the Executive Mayors of both Capricorn
District and Polokwane municipalities for having agreed to our request to dedicate a site
at the Silicon cemetery for the burial of our heroes and heroines.

I am happy to announce that General Ike Maphoto will be the first of our heroes to be
buried at that heroes' acre today.

We appreciate that during his lifetime, Bra Ike Maphoto was conferred with the National
Order of Luthuli.

This was in recognition of Bra Ike's contributions to South Africa in the struggle for
democracy and nation building.

His organisation, the African National Congress also named one of its branches in this town after this struggle icon.

This is indeed a deserved honour for a man who once faced the death gallows on foreign lands fighting for the liberation of our motherland.

It is a tribute to a man who prized the freedom of his people above his own personal freedom.

Fellow mourners;

We welcome you to this occasion with heavy hearts because we are today poorer without Bra Ike. However, this is also an opportunity to celebrate a life well lived; a life lived in full service of humanity.

As Limpopo we have a reason to feel proud to have produced such a quality leader with impeccable credentials.

As former President Nelson Mandela has said to us, what count in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead.

Lesiba Isaac Maphoto did not just live; he led a life of purpose, a life that made a difference in the lives of many other people.

Bra Ike lived a life with a clearly defined purpose; his purpose was to serve his people. General Ike Maphoto leaves us with an inheritance of wisdom, servant hood, selflessness and unmatched patriotism.

As we welcome you to this final farewell ceremony, we are able to testify that in Bra Ike we have lost a great teacher and a mentor.

A great reservoir of knowledge and wisdom has been taken away from us. We have lost an arsenal and depository of history. The great baobab tree has fallen. As I conclude my welcome remarks I want to once again extend the condolences of our Provincial Government to the Maphoto family for your sad loss.

We thank you for having shared your father and grandfather's time with the rest of the country. We know that our struggle has taken so much away from you and we can never be able to fully repay you. All we can say is that thank you very much for giving us General Ike Maphoto.

May his soul rest in peace, and I welcome you all.

I thank you!