

ADDRESS BY THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO, AMBASSADOR CHUPU MATHABATHA ON  
THE OCCASION OF THE PROVINCIAL STABILITY SUMMIT, HELD AT THE RANCH  
HOTEL, POLOKWANE.

14 March 2019

Chairperson of the session, MEC Makoma Makhurupetje;

Other MECs present here;

Executive Mayor, Cllr John Mpe;

Our host Executive Mayor, Cllr Thembi Nkadimeng;

Provincial Head of the IEC, Mme Nkaro Mateta;

HOD for the Department of Community Safety, Ntate Tsebe;

Representatives from the South African Police Service;

Representatives from the State Security Agency;

Esteemed ladies and gentlemen:

Good morning!

Let me start by commending the Department of Community Safety under the leadership of  
Mme Makoma Makhurupetje for conceptualising this Provincial Stability Summit.

I think that this is an important step into the right direction.

Peace and stability during the election season is a non-negotiable imperative.

It is in this spirit that I also wish to appreciate the attendance of every one of you in this  
summit. Your presence here is highly valued and appreciated.

I am confident that each and every one of you will contribute significantly to the attainment of  
the objectives of this summit.

I take it for granted that you all know that the central objective of this summit is to ensure  
stability in the province before and during the coming National General Elections.

We know that the President has already announced the 08th of May as the date for the  
elections.

This means that the eyes of the world are now fixed on South Africa. The world would want  
to see what we make of this hard-fought democracy.

I can tell you that the ultimate declaration of elections as having been free and fair will not  
only depend on what happens on the actual election day, but a culmination of everything that  
takes place since the declaration of election day.

It is for this reason that we have all gathered here to amongst other things;

Review our current strategies of dealing with matters of instability in the Province, and

Ensuring integrated plans to guarantee provincial stability.

Programme Director;

Our Province is known for its peace and tranquillity. In fact, the peace and stability in this  
Province is our biggest meal ticket.

When we go out of the Province to lobby for investments, the fact that our Province is the  
most stable and the most peaceful always come in handy for us.

It is because of the peace and stability that is reigning in this Province that over the past five  
years we were able to attract millions of direct foreign investments into our provincial  
economy.

The increasing numbers of foreign tourists who visit this Province is also largely owed to the  
stability which our Province is known for.

The appetite that is there from foreign businesses to participate in our Musina-Makhado SEZ

project can also be credited to the political stability in the Province.  
There is simply no price you can put on peace and stability.

Peace and stability supplements the health of any functioning democracy. Without peace and stability, democracy will be undermined and anarchy will take over.

Sustaining peace and stability is in itself a process to deepen democracy. Our duty to deepen democracy cannot be overemphasised.

Without democracy we cannot make any advancement on the socio-economic aspirations of the people.

There is significant body of evidence, here in Africa and across the globe, proving that without democracy there can't be any socio-economic advancement.

This means that we will not be able to build houses, build roads and expand on our infrastructure network.

In fact, without democracy, even the most basic of human rights will be taken away from the people.

The rights such as equality before the law, human dignity, the right to privacy, freedom of religion and political rights would be severely curtailed.

Programme Director;

We are here because all of us are interested in free, fair and credible election.

In essence, we are here because we believe that elections should be true expression of the will of the electorate.

What we are doing here today may appear small to some people, but it is actually a very significant exercise. You would know that in some countries, it is government which would be doing all sorts of things to frustrate the idea of free and fair election.

We should commend ourselves, that we are here as government, the election body and the law enforcement agencies, campaigning and working for free and fair elections.

In some countries, the situation will be in reserve – you would find the government using both the electoral body and the police to suppress the will of the people.

We are here saying; let the will of the people happen. It is not the role of the government, the IEC or the police to determine who win elections. The people decide who should win an election.

Our collective role is to support the free expression of the people's wishes.

Free, fair and credible elections means that all those entitled to vote must be free to make their choice.

As you would know; in our country every citizen who is registered and is 18 years or older is entitled to vote.

As I have said earlier, a number of things would be considered in making a determination whether an election has been free and fair.

Part of these factors is that, there should be no intimidation during or towards elections – the voters should be guaranteed of the secrecy of their vote.

Fair elections means that all registered political parties should be free to campaign for support and hold meetings and rallies.

Programme Director;

There are concerns that some levels of instability in the Province would threaten the realisation of free and fair elections.

Part of the issues that concerns us is the mushrooming of the so-called shutdowns. We do not want any area of our Province to be considered a no-go area.

Yesterday we spent the day in Imbizo at one of the most successful Imbizo meeting.

Everybody here know that Moutse used to be called a no go area, and we proved that narrative wrong yesterday.

Some of the issues I just mentioned include the prolonged protests taking place in various parts of the Province which undermines the right to freedom of movement.

This summit should respond to these areas of concern and adopt a clear and workable strategy to defeat any possible threat.

I must however emphasise that the magnitude of the incidences I have referred to is not out of proportion. We just do not want to leave anything to chance.

There are also important mitigating factors which support our yearning for free, fair and credible election. These factors include the sound working relations between the government, the IEC and our law enforcement structures.

The second most important factor is the maturity of our political leaders.

I must say that since the beginning of this election season, we have not had any serious thing of concern coming from the side of our political parties. We have not heard any inflammatory language coming from the side of our politicians. This type of maturity is highly helpful.

Ladies and gentlemen;

I want to conclude by re-inviting you to take the business of this summit seriously. The future of this country is dependent on the health of its democracy.

Without a healthy and resilient democracy, we cannot attain the socio-economic aspiration we so much yearn for.

Let us continue the partnership to build a peaceful and stable Limpopo.

I also wish to urge those who are campaigning for political support to continue doing so within the ambit of the agreed rules.

We must never forget that the task of growing Limpopo remains our collective responsibility. I wish you a robust and successful summit.

I thank you!