

ADDRESS BY THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO, MR CHUPU MATHABATHA ON THE OCCASION OF THE PROVINCIAL WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATIONS, HELD AT THE CHUENE RESORT, POLOKWANE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY.

09 August 2022

Programme Director

Members of the Executive Council;

The Speaker of our Legislature and all MPLs;

Executive Mayor of Capricorn District Municipality, Cllr. Mamedupi Teffo;

Executive Mayor of Polokwane Local Municipality, Cllr. John Mpe;

All Councillors present today;

The provincial Leadership of SALGA;

Our Director-General, Ntate Nape Nchabeleng;

Representatives of Women's Organisations;

Leaders of various political parties;

Friends from the Media;

Ladies and gentlemen:

Ndaa!

Avuxeni!

Thobela!

Goeie Dag!

I greet you in the mighty and beautiful name of the women of our province.

I also greet you in the name of the patriotic and courageous women generation of 1956.

Today, the 09th of August, is an important day on our national calendar. This day is our National Women's Day.

Let me take this opportunity on behalf of our government and greet all the women of our province on this important National Women's Day.

To all our mothers, the loving wives, the sisters and our daughters, I say '**Malibongwe igama la makozikazi**'.

I salute you in the name of celebrated icons of women struggles – I talk of women such as Mama Charlotte Maxeke, Rahima Moosa, Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Sophie Williams, Dora Tamana, Ida Mntwana, Bertha Gxowa, Florence Matomela, Mohumagadi Madinoge and all other unsung heroines of our country in the main and Limpopo in particular.

These and many others are women who fought bravely and tirelessly to bring apartheid government to its knees. We salute them, and vow to honour their legacy by continuing with the struggle for the total emancipation of women.

This day is about saluting the courage and tenacity of all the women in our country.

This day is about celebrating the achievements of women from all sectors of our society.

Today we celebrate the successes of women in politics,

We celebrate the successes of women in business,

We celebrate the successes of women in leadership,

We celebrate women who are in the academia,

We celebrate women who keep fires burning in our homes,

We also celebrate the women who are in sport.

Programme Director

Recently, our national women's football team gave us more reasons to celebrate.

Our women in football have done what their male counterparts have been failing to do since after the 1996 African Cup of Nations, they brought the Women African Cup of Nations to our country. They are the heroes who deserve adoration and celebration.

What is more humbling is that a good number of the players who represented South Africa in Morocco are from Limpopo. They are our homegrown queens.

Indeed, Limpopo is a home of abundance when it comes to talent for women in sport.

This is the home of Caster Semenya and the home of Noko Matlou.

We cannot forget that the President of the National Netball Federation, Mme Cecilia Molokwane is also a daughter of the soil.

We hope that their successes will inspire another generation of successful women in sport from this province.

I can speak with authority and confidence in saying that sport liberates. Women who are in sport enjoy a different type of freedom.

These women are also able to make a living out of sport.

It is for this reason that, as government, we are investing more resources in school sport. We hope that as many young women would take up the opportunity and unleash their talents through sport.

Programme Director

Today on this important day of commemoration and reflection, I want to speak to women of Limpopo from all persuasions.

I refer to women in business; women in politics; women in construction; women in tourism; women in the academia; women in the art and entertainment business, women who are in the NGO sector; and generally, all women of this province.

I want to say to you that we commend all of you for doing what you are doing in your various spaces and different sectors.

All of you are contributing to making Limpopo a homely province.

We thank you for the leadership role in our families.

In whatever you do, wherever you may be in this province, you must be assured of our hand of support and tutelage.

Where you seem not to see this hand of support you must never hesitate to come knocking at our doors.

Our message for this year is that we invite you to unleash your power as women and rise.

Our government is forever ready to assist and support women owned business.

Women who have an appetite for entrepreneurship are encouraged to consider starting their own businesses. Do it today, do not wait for tomorrow. Women are rising.

Government support is there, all what you need to do is to link-up with relevant agencies and institutions.

Programme Director

The challenge for you as women is to be available for each other. You need to support each other. As women you must be there to hold each other's hand.

You must start by supporting and guiding a girl child. Young women should benefit from the life experiences of older women.

Young women must benefit from the experiences of those who walked the path before them.

Young girls must not learn things from the streets. It is the responsibility of older women in the family and in the community to guide the young ones.

The unity of women is necessary for the victory of women.

As women you must provide a climbing ladder for each other and not to pull each other down.

You must rise by lifting others.

No one should think that they can shine whilst everyone around them is suffocating in a dark corner.

Let us be there for each other in a true spirit of sisterhood.

I urge all women to embrace and take advantage of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Please use the 4IR to leverage opportunities that are available for your socio-economic emancipation.

I call upon you to take advantage of government's resolve to bridge the digital gap among the poor rural and the middle urban class. Empower yourself with information.

Programme Director

In celebrating and honouring women of our country, we must make a commitment to join hands in fighting against the oppression of women.

We must make a commitment to fight against gender-based violence.

We must join hands to fight against the emotional abuse of women.

We must fight against the physical abuse of women.

Together we must commit ourselves to fight against the ballooning rape culture in our society.

We must raise our voices against the killing of women and children in our communities.

Together, we must call on the police to:

- ✓ Improve their response time to incidents of domestic violence, including the abuse of children;

- ✓ Desist from the tendency to turn back victims of alleged abuses because they think that there is no strong case.
- ✓ The issue of sufficient or insufficient evidence is for the courts to deal with and not the police;
- ✓ We must also call on the police to desist from the tendency of not arresting perpetrators because of their social status in the society;
- ✓ We call on the SAPS to dedicate enough resources including manpower to tackle domestic abuse, which is out recent pandemic.

We also call on the courts to refuse bail to perpetrators of gender based violence as in most cases such perpetrators go on to kill their spouses whilst on bail.

We further call on the courts to impose harshest sentences to those who are found guilty of abusing women and children.

We are saying this because the levels of violence against women and children are terrifying and unacceptable.

The parole authorities must think hard before approving parole for perpetrators of Gender Based Violence.

There are many incidences where women are violated and even killed by people who have been released on parole.

We are calling for the overhaul of the parole system so that parole is no longer an automatic right but a rare privilege.

Criminals must spend at least two-thirds of their sentences before they can even be considered for parole. The consent of the victim should be an overriding factor in parole considerations.

Women should not fear to walk the street because a dangerous criminal has been let loose by the parole system.

Programme Director

We must also confront the economic abuse of women.

Many women tolerate and remain in abusive relationships because their abusers are their providers – they depend on the same abusers for their clothing, food and housing needs.

Our government is committed to work with women in order to break the historic barriers which have denied women opportunities to provide for themselves and their families.

As I have said, researchers have proven that one of the things that trap women in abusive relationships is the economic abilities of their abusive partners.

Most women find themselves in a situation where ending an abusive relationship will most likely result their children losing their homes and financial support.

Often, these women pay with their lives. This has to change.

It is for this reason that the government is championing programmes and initiatives that are aimed at ensuring that women play a meaningful role in the economic life of the country.

We believe that an economically liberated woman stands a better chance to reason and take action against abuse.

We also challenge private sector companies to join government in these noble efforts to ensure the economic liberation of women.

We know that many private sector companies have not yet fully embraced the imperative of women leadership.

We want to see women as CEO of big companies.

We want to see women serving on the boards of big corporates which are doing business in our country.

Women cannot be fully free until they have the economic means to help exercise their freedom.

We are also ashamed by those men, the fathers who are not providing for their children. This tendency adds an avoidable burden on women.

I have said it before that it is not acceptable for a father to be forced through a court order to support his own children.

In some cases, we have kids who receive child support grants whilst their fathers have decent jobs and are driving around with flashy cars, wearing designer clothes and drinking dated alcohol. This is shameful and totally unacceptable.

Programme Director

This day belongs to women. It is your day to celebrate and commemorate your struggles. I will not spoil your day with a long speech.

I want to take this opportunity and say; Happy Women's Day to all women of our province and the country at large!

Wathint' Abafazi Wathint' imbokodo!

I thank you!