

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY MEC SEAPARO SEKOATI ON BEHALF OF PREMIER STAN MATHABATHA AT THE MASS FUNERAL FOR THE 16 VICTIMS OF THE R574 FORMALLY KNOWN AS R579 TRAGIC ACCIDENT IN MOTETEMA, HELD AT TAFELKOP STADIUM ON 11 MARCH 2023

Members and Representatives of all Families Bereaved

MEC for Transport and Community Safety Mme. Florence Radzilani

All MECs present here today

The Executive Mayor of Sekhukhune District Municipality, Cllr. Moleke Mokganyetsi

The Mayor of Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality Cllr. Tladi

Kgosi Boleu Rammupudu II and Our Esteemed Traditional Leaders present

The Leadership of Groblersdal Taxi Association and all other Taxi Associations present

Leaders of all Faith Based, Business, and Civil Society Organizations present

Leaders of all political parties present

Representatives of all other formations supporting the bereaved families

Friends from the Media

Distinguished Guests

Thobela

Par.1

Programme Director, we are gathered here today with our hearts heavily shattered for the loss of 16 lives of our loved ones in the horrific accident that happened on R574 road near in Motetema.

Par.2

On behalf of the government and the people of Limpopo, I wish to extend our heartfelt and deepest condolences to the families, the colleagues, and friends who have lost their loved ones during this incident. We do admit that no amount of words can heal your broken hearts and mend your heavy souls under these difficult moments, therefore we pray for God's comfort and grace to you all in this time of your need.

Par.3

Truly, as compatriots, we are deeply saddened when we experience such loss of lives on our roads because incidents like these have severe impact on families who loose loved their ones, as well as survivors and witnesses who remain affected physically and psychologically by such tragedies, that's is the reason I also wish to thank all the emergency service providers and community members who were involved in assisting the victims.

Par.4

We are aware that amongst the 16 victims of this carnage we are laying to rest today, seven (07) are learners, and to the families, friends, and school mates of Onkabetse Blessing Nkadimeng, Mogau Benjamin Tjabadi, Nompumelelo Pearl Bamula, Khomotso Codillia Molanje, Khenso Hlelo Phaladi, Mogau Makgoo, and Maome Bonolo Matlala..... gomotsegang bagaetsho.

Par.5

We know you were still expecting a lot from your children and friends, and that was the case to us as community members and government leaders because a loss of a young child robs us of a potential that they possessed to contribute to the bright future of their lives, their families, and the nation at large.

Par.6

Incidents of this kind also have economic consequences for the people involved and for the society at large because they take away bread winners, and people who are active contributors to the economy of our province and the nation.

Par.7

Programme Director, We were elated when the festive road safety statistics were released by MEC for Transport and community safety Mme Florence Radzilani earlier this year, wherein we recorded a reduction of fatalities by 20.8 percent.

Par.8

However, the year 2023 did not start well for us on our roads in the province. This is because since the month of February to date, we witnessed horrific accidents with shock and dismay. On the 13th of February this year, there was another horrifying accident where a bus carrying mostly workers, collided with a cash-in-transit van on the N1 highway near the Hendrik Verwoed tunnel, rolling off a bridge and into the Phandanama River in Makhado, and 22 lives were lost. Just a few weeks down the line, we are here today due to another road collision.

Par.9

This calls for us to be more careful and more responsible on our roads. A second of haste or impatience can result in a lifetime of loss and pain, and there is no risk that is worth taking, no matter how experienced you think you are or may be as a driver. Our actions in a split of a second can course more damage than we can imagine.

Par.10

As provincial government we are playing our part in ensuring that our road infrastructure is improved. In this regard, Provincial Treasury has allocated six (06)

percent of the provincial budget for the coming 2023/24 financial year towards new infrastructure, which includes upgrading some of the roads from gravel to tar roads.

Par.11

Through the Road Agency Limpopo, we are continuing to upgrade and maintain our roads infrastructure. We have plans to upgrade and maintain the P51/3 Groblersdal to Stofberg road; the D2923 from Denilton to Siyabuswa road; and the D856 Dennilton – Moloto road amongst others, which will be done in phases starting from the coming financial year until they are completed.

Par.12

On the other hand, SANRAL has completed the design stage of the R574 from Groblersdal to Morwaneng road and they have indicated that a contractor to repair the collapsing bridge which is situated 12km from Groblersdal will be appointed in no time.

Equally important, in the budget delivered just this past Tuesday the 7th of March, Provincial Treasury has allocated to the department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure R4.950 billion in 2023/24, part of which, R2.009 billion will be allocated to Roads Agency Limpopo as part of its roads maintenance and upgrading, partnerships and other operational costs.

Par.13

Programme Director, since the occurrence of this incident, our government has been supporting the affected families and people through our local government and the Social Development service. We will all continue to live with this ordeal, and I would urge families, friends, loved ones, and community members at large, to approach our social welfare service for psycho-social support. You should never be burdened alone, and we cannot afford to lose other lives due to the traumas and depressions connected hereto.

Par.14

As we approach the period of the Easter holidays, most of us will be heading towards our various pilgrimage and holiday destinations. I humbly request both motorists and pedestrians to be more vigilant, more responsible, and more careful on the roads. Let us reduce speed and exercise patience, and let us all treat our roads as a shared amenity.

Par.15

While we will continue to reflect on this incident and many like it, our prayers will always be with the families, friends, colleagues, and loved ones of those who have perished, particularly learners and staff of the Dynamique Primary School.

We say to you all, find peace and solace in the grace of heavens.

Par.16

On behalf of Premier Chupu Mathabatha, I would also like to thank the Sekhukhune District Municipality, the Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality, all private persons and business entities for helping in organizing a dignified send-off for our beloved ones.

Par.17

As I mentioned earlier, there are no words that can bring enough comfort to you at this time, but may your pain be relieved and your hearts be eased by our prayers, and may your tears be wiped dry by the love we send to you.

Par.18

May the spirit of all our departed loved ones, the sons and daughters of Limpopo, rest in eternal peace...

We are with you.

I thank you.