

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO MR
CHUPU STANLEY MATHABATHA ON THE OCCASION OF
THE OPENING OF THE PROVINCIAL HOUSE OF
TRADITIONAL LEADERS HELD AT MOLETJI VILLAGE.**

04th April 2023

Chairperson of the House, Hosi Ngove;

Deputy Chairperson Kgosi Rammupudu;

Our Host, Kgosi Moloto;

All Esteemed Traditional Leaders present here today;

MEC for CoGHSTA, Ntate Basikopo Makamu;

Honourable Speaker of the Legislature and MPLs present here;

Your Worship Executive Mayors and Mayors of our
Municipalities;

All Honourable Councillors present;

Director General Mr. Nape Nchabeleng and all officials of
government;

Friends from the Media;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is always a humbling honour for me to address this esteemed
Provincial House of Traditional Leaders, ***ntlo-kgolo ya
maapara-nkwe a rena mo Limpopo.***

It is indeed my great pleasure to be here with you today at the opening of the Limpopo House of Traditional Leaders taking place at Moletjie village, ***khanseleng ya mosate wa Bahlaloga***.

As the Premier of Limpopo, I am honoured to participate in this auspicious event, which marks yet another milestone in the close cooperation between our government and the institutions of traditional leadership.

Our journey together has been long and has not been without its challenges. However, it is vital that we sustain our common relationship for the benefit of our communities, who deserve our commitment to working together in harmony and respect.

The opening of this house comes after the presentation of the State of the Province Address, the Budget Vote by MEC Makamu, and IDP consultations by municipalities. During SOPA, several important pronouncements were made that directly affect traditional leaders and their communities.

First and foremost, we recognize the pivotal role of traditional leadership in our society and pledge to provide further support to ensure that traditional leaders have access to the resources they need to carry out their duties effectively.

Chairperson

We are all feeling the detrimental effects of load shedding. The energy crisis in our country has reached unpalatable levels. During SOPA, one of the commitments we made was to deal with the electricity challenges that exist.

It is therefore in this context that, we reiterate our full confidence in the leadership of President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, to decisively deal with this load shedding challenge.

On our part as Limpopo, we will announce more details regarding our energy plans, when the Provincial Energy Strategy is finalized in due course. It is therefore on this important note that we reiterate our call to all our municipalities and government entities to play their part in the just energy transition project, by embracing renewable energy sources as part of measures to stabilise the Eskom grid.

We are calling on all hands to be on deck, primarily because we have since stated that traditional leaders have a vital role to play in stimulating and supporting economic development in our province.

We pledge to fully involve traditional leaders in this process and to work in partnership with them to create a thriving economic environment that benefits all our people.

As the Limpopo Provincial Government, we believe that traditional leaders are an integral part of our governance institutions.

Therefore, to put concrete expression to this fact, we re-commit ourselves to ensure that traditional leaders are fully involved in municipal councils, and we will continue to provide systematic support to them during ceremonies and bereavements.

Similarly, we have since made a committed to provide motor vehicles for Senior Traditional Leaders. We are pleased to report that the process to purchase those motor vehicles in this current financial year, 2023/24, is well underway.

Those motor vehicles will enable traditional leaders to carry out their work as they lead our communities. Through the leadership of the House and the office of the MEC for CoGHSTA, we have since and will continue ensuring that effective and efficient communications on this Important matter is streamlined.

In the same breadth, the provincial government continues with its programme of constructing Traditional Council offices, and the provisioning tools of trade respectively.

We have since released more details on these matters during both State of the Province Address and MEC Makamu's departmental budget vote.

These are among the measures that we are undertaking as we ensure sustenance of the institution of traditional leadership. The provincial government values this institution.

Honourable Members

The successful implementation of initiation schools is another testament to the invaluable role played by traditional leadership in our society. We are please to report that last year over seventy-nine thousand initiates in Limpopo, successfully went through the rite of passage.

We are determined to continue working closely with traditional leaders to ensure that this important rite of passage is carried out safely and with the utmost respect for the rights and dignity of all participants.

In line with the new legislation, the Traditional Leadership and Khoisan Act, the traditional leaders fully participate in the Provincial Initiation Coordinating Committee (PICC).

This committee which has since been established, is charged with the responsibility of coordinating and ensuring the smooth-running of initiation schools.

We are therefore pleased to observe that our resolution to strive for compliance as we implement these initiation schools, is fully adhered to. However, we want to condemn those, particularly in the Sekhukhune District Municipality, who will attempt to run illegal initiation schools.

We are therefore calling upon our law enforcement agencies to clamp down on these practice and ensure that perpetrators are brought to book.

We are not going to spoil our clean record on the running of initiation schools in the province because of profit driven characters.

In our engagement before this meeting, the Executive Committee of your Council had impressed upon me that the process towards the 2023 initiation season is well underway, with more than seven hundred and twenty applications having been received and responses being given to applications.

What we would want the institution of traditional leadership to emphasise is that, these schools should be used to teach moral responsibility and rebuild our society that is ravaged by all sorts of ills like gender-based violence and femicide.

Honourable Chairperson

Regarding progress on the implementation of the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act, I am pleased to report that our government has made significant strides towards ensuring that the Act is fully operational.

It is in this context that, we note with disappointment the legal challenge by the Legal Resources Centre of Cape Town.

They are challenging the existence of traditional leadership. This is unfortunate as it wants to take away the rights that you as traditional leaders have. In fact, using a more clearer lens, this legal action seeks to erode the institution of traditional leadership if not challenged. We are monitoring the matter.

In the same breath, let me go back to a matter I emphasised during the SOPA address in February 2023. We are saying that let traditional leadership disputes be resolved through dialogue and not the courts, as it has become so common these days.

It is in the same spirit that I wish to reiterate the fact that, the institution of Traditional Leadership also has a role to play in the continued reconstruction and development of our country.

It is in this context that I call on municipalities to work closely with Traditional Leaders on issues of rural economic development.

On the issue of the working relations between traditional councils and municipal councils, I want to say that the working relations between elected leadership and traditional leadership is not a matter of favour. It is a must in our law and in terms of the policies of the governing party, the ANC.

Let me take this opportunity to appreciate mayors and councillors who continue to work and support traditional leaders. We know for example, that district municipalities collaborate with Local Houses and provide the needed support.

The provincial government continues to encourage municipalities to work with institutions of traditional leadership, especially in the planning and delivery of service delivery programmes.

The integrated development planning process should be used for this purpose. It is also our submission that Local Houses of Traditional Leaders should facilitate such cooperation. Specific cases requiring intervention should be directed to the MEC for CoGHSTA by the Executive Committee of the House.

Furthermore, I appeal to all citizens to work together in fighting gender-based violence and femicide. To this end, we are calling for the formation of civil compacts to address this serious issue. We must work together to protect the most vulnerable members of our society.

I am also appealing to the house to address in a traditional way the position of women especially after bereavement of the male traditional leader. We have sadly noted how in the past these women have been left destitute after the passing of their husbands.

Women and children cannot live in fear forever. Government is conducting awareness campaigns across the province.

However, more and more are abused, raped and killed every single day. Enough is Enough. We need action now.

Honourable Members

In conclusion, I would like to announce a planned Lekgotla between the provincial government and members of the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders, to be held before the end of the first quarter, this financial year.

Through this unique platform, traditional leaders will fully engage with the executives on the role to be played in creating a truly developmental state that leaves no one behind.

It is on this important note that, I want to thank Kgosi Moloto for being the first host of the official opening of the house at a tribal kraal. I also appreciate the new planned format of rotating House activities across all the five districts of the province.

Thank you all for your attendance and participation in this historic event. May we continue to work together to build a better future for all of Limpopo's people.

Nda!