

**OPENING ADDRESS BY MEC NKAKARENG RAKGOALE DURING THE VISIT BY
TRANSPORT MINISTER SINDISIWE CHIKUNGA TO LIMPOPO PROVINCE.**

Minister for Transport Umama Sindisiwe Chikunga

Transport and Community Safety MEC Vho-Mme Florence Radzilani

**Treasury MEC Ntate Seaparo Sekoati who is also standing in for CoGHSTA
MEC Basikopo Makamu**

All Executive Mayors and MMCs present here

SALGA represenatives

Board Members of both RAL and SANRAL

CEOs of various organisations

Distinguished guests

Members of the media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning

Ndimatsheroni

Thobela

Avuxeni

It is indeed a great honour for me to stand here before you and render this item today. I am also here speaking on behalf of Premier Chupu Stanley Mathabatha, who had wished to be part of this important meeting, but could not make it due to other government commitments equally as important as this gathering. I am accompanied by my two counterparts MEC Sekoati and MEC Radzilani, as well as our leaders at district level. The presence of leaders from various spheres of government, is really an indication that we take matters related to road infrastructures at the highest regard.

Ladies and Gentlemen

This day present an opportunity for the Department of Public Works Roads and Infrastructure to highlight the significant strides that we are making in the provision of infrastructure in the province, particularly on roads.

The presentations that are going to be made by our officials in this session will give a true account of the state of roads in our province.

In fact, we have noted with concern that there concerted efforts by some sectors of the society to create an impression that there is nothing that is being done in terms of roads infrastructure provision, as well as the maintenance of the existing road infrastructures.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure is among the strategic departments that are tasked to see that there is improved service delivery. The fact is our people are expecting more improved infrastructure investment in the province, however the reality is we are currently unable to address all service delivery concerns at a go due to budgetary constraints. Our people need new roads, new clinics, new schools and full rehabilitation and maintenance of the existing road infrastructures. Moreover, it is expected that we should do more with less and still maintain the high level of service standards.

Roads Infrastructure challenges dominate the agenda of our business as a department and its entity RAL. This particular situation requires everyone to work hard towards resolving these service delivery challenges. We have taken a conscious decision to pay special attention to our paved road network in terms of rehabilitation and maintenance.

Programme Director, allow me to indicate that in the recent past our province has been severely affected by floods. Eleven bridges were washed away across the province, with Mopani and Vhembe Districts being the hardest hit. Assessment reports indicate that 202 roads were badly damaged. These floods have reversed the work of rehabilitation and patching of potholes that we launched in August last year through “**Operation Thiba Mekoti Ditseleng.**”

Having realised the devastation caused by the floods, the department together with its entity RAL redoubled its efforts on road repairs. We also signed an MOU with municipalities and CoGHSTA with the purpose of capacitating municipalities in terms of roads maintenance. This is done in the spirit of

Intergovernmental Relations and the implementation of the District Development Model that seeks to ensure that there is well coordinated service delivery.

I am happy to reports that 10 contractors have been appointed, and are already hard at work maintaining and rehabilitating internal streets in all the five districts.

In this current financial year, we have redoubled our efforts and embarked on a vigorous task of maintaining road infrastructures, as part of our routine maintenance plan. We have managed to register progress on the roads throughout the province. This is an indication that indeed we are a listening government.

Honourable Minister

We have issued an instruction to our district heads, as well as managers to leave their offices and join road workers who are all out to maintain our roads infrastructure. For the past few weeks, I have been on the ground on unannounced visit to monitor the operation **Thiba Mekoti Ditseleng**, which was dubbed **Operation**

Vala Zonke at national level. I must say that we have covered a lot of ground in this regard.

As the province we are delighted to be hosting you Minister Chikunga and your delegation as this will allow you to witness the good work that we are doing, the significant strides that we are making, as well as the challenges that we are faced with. The sad reality is that as a province we are unable to deliver new roads projects for this new financial year, as our budget is seriously squeezed and constrained. We hope this special visit will allow you to go back to national and highlight our plight for more resources.

Ladies and Gentlemen

With these few words we welcome everyone, and thank you for being with us today. For those who may not know, this session will be our opportunity to share our latest developments and explain how this process will lead us into our next phase of roads infrastructure maintenance. We have laid out a roadmap that puts us on solid footing and this will be detailed by our officials as they make their presentations. We are eager to share the details and get your inputs on what improvements we can make.

As key stakeholders in the business of road infrastructure, your viewpoints count as much as anyone in the team. We hope you feel comfortable sharing your thoughts.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Please join me in welcoming our Transport Minister Umama Sindisiwe Chikunga on stage. Minister Chikunga over to you!