

**ADDRESS BY THE MEC OF HEALTH, DR. PHOPHI RAMATHUBA ON
BEHALF OF GOVERNMENT DURING THE MEMORIAL SERVICE OF
THE LATE FIRST LADY, MME MAGGY MATHABATHA, AT JACK
BOTES HALL**

05 JULY 2023

The Mathabatha family;

Colleagues in the Executive;

The Director-General of our Province;

Executive mayors and mayors of local municipalities;

Royalty and royal councils present;

Institutions supporting our democracy;

The security cluster;

Members of the business fraternity;

The leadership of the ANC and other formations;

Colleagues from the media;

Comrades and friends:

Allow me to send our sincere and deepest condolences to Premier Chupu Mathabatha, the children, the entire extended family, and friends on behalf of the provincial government.

We have gathered here to pay homage to a special lady who represented the downtrodden, poverty-stricken masses of our people.

Mme Maggy Mathabatha was a fundamental support system to the person of the Premier, and to some of us who served in his cabinet.

She gave Premier Mathabatha the presentable look we all grew accustomed to and kept the family fires burning.

The news of the untimely passing of the First Lady left us all in shock, devastated and painfully speechless. The sudden news of the passing of our mother has left all of us shuttered, confused and utterly heartbroken. The First Lady was a woman of compassion, humility and love.

Mme Mathabatha presented a mother figure to all of us in the executive. Her love was unconditional, her level of care limitless.

Through the Limpopo First Lady Trust, Mme Mathabatha ensured that the living condition of our people changed for the better. She mobilized resources to build houses, procure and distribute food parcels to the needy and donate wheelchairs to the differently abled and represented the women of our province with extreme diligence.

She organized the first gala dinner for domestic workers, including the first excellence awards for domestic workers.

She had befriended the poorest of the poor, specifically to help them change their material conditions.

Mme Mathabatha was unassuming. She was humble and accessible. She was a diligent custodian of a better life.

Her touch of compassion has helped fight poverty, alleviate hunger and empower women.

Mme Mathabatha was at the forefront of fighting for decent wages on behalf the vulnerable workers where she was employed.

This was shown when she worked at the shops during the dark days of apartheid.

We came here to pay our special tribute to an outstanding, dedicated and selfless woman who spent her life insuring the well-being of other women in our province.

Since she commenced with her responsibilities as the First Lady of our province in 2013, she fought tooth and nail for the betterment of the lives of the poor and the working class across our beautiful Province.

We have lost ten (10) years of unbroken loyalty to the public service, more specifically, the plight of the poor and the vulnerable. Her commitment to the people of Limpopo was unmatched, unparalleled and without any immediate counterpart.

Mme Mathabatha was an ever-present in our lives. Giving guidance where necessary, and credit where it was due.

Even though soft-spoken, Mme Mathabatha was a well of knowledge and wisdom. She was supportive in the line of our work and continued to cheer us as we serviced the people of Limpopo.

She was a consistent pillar to our Premier, supporting his work and ensuring that the family unit remains intact.

With pain in our hearts, we say today that a glittering star in the family has ceased to shine.

A flame of hope of our province has all been extinguished permanently.

The mother we are remembering here was a prayer woman who brought all of us closer to God. She supported some of us when we were installed as members of the women's league in church.

She was a knowledgeable patriot who cared about the interests of South Africans and was always ready to defend the gains of the democratic order.

The First Lady was an indelible part of our struggle to expand access to quality housing, better living conditions and access to food through the distribution of food parcels.

Death robbed us of a larger than life character, compassionate mother and an ideal servant of the poor and the working class.

The blow we suffered as government is unmitigated, the pain unrelenting and the loss unexplainable.

We should allow ourselves a moment to celebrate a life well lived.

As we celebrate her life, we must remember her forthrightness, fortitude and selflessness which underpinned her professional and personal life.

This made the First Lady a colossus who served the public with unmatched dedication and unprecedented humility.

Mme Mathabatha displayed her outstanding fidelity to the public service.

I know as a matter of fact how enthusiastic the First Lady was about the vision of Limpopo and how it should be transformed to accommodate as many women in leadership roles as possible.

We are mourning an epitome of zeal, professionalism and willingness to go an extra mile in the service of humanity.

We should make a solemn commitment that we will not allow the efforts of Mme Maggy Mathabatha to deteriorate with her sudden departure. We should not bury the First Lady Trust with her.

In her memory, we need to redouble our collective efforts in ensuring that the poor are taken care of, the disabled are given the necessary care and support and the women are empowered.

Her departure should strengthen our resolve and recharge our energy never to betray what she stood for and built with sweat and dedication.

She had envisioned a public service that was neither biased nor exclusive.

She carried with her our collective devotion to achieve our developmental goals, to effect meaningful change in the lives of ordinary people, to create access to quality life and social services.

Mme Mathabatha was a true mother of our province, loving and caring.

In conclusion, on behalf of the government, we wish the Mathabatha family, colleagues and friends strength in these difficult and trying times.

May the soul of Mme Maggy Mathabatha rest in eternal peace!

I thank you!