

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE MEC OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY MME FLORENCE RADZILANI ON BEHALF OF LIMPOO PREMIER, MR CHUPU MATHABATHA ON THE OCCASION OF THE PROVINCIAL WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATIONS, HELD AT REBONE SPORTS GROUNDS, STEILOP Township.
- 09 August 2023.

Programme Director

Members of the Executive Council present here today;

The Speaker of our Legislature, Mme Rosemary Molapo;

Members of the Provincial Legislature;

Executive Mayor of Waterburg District Municipality;

Your Worship Mayor of Mogalakwena Local Municipality;

Your Worship Executive Mayors, Mayors, Speakers, Chief whips and all Councillors present today;

The Leadership of SALGA in Limpopo;

Leadership of the Provincial House of Traditional and Khoi-san Leaders;

Our Esteemed Traditional Leaders present here today;

Our Director-General, Ntate Nape Nchabeleng;

Representatives of Women's Organisations;

Leaders of various political parties;

Friends from the Media;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and gentlemen:

Nda!

Avuxeni!

Thobela!

Goeie Dag!

Let me take this opportunity to greet all the women of Limpopo, on behalf of the provincial government, as we celebrate this important occasion that marks the National Women's Day.

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, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, Albertina Sisulu, and all other unsung heroines liberation struggle.

I therefore say to all the mothers, the loving wives, the sisters and the girl child, '***Malibongwe igama la makosikasi***'. You are indeed special to this government and society at large.

Programme Director

Indeed we are honoured as the provincial government to see Limpopo having descended to Steilooop Township. This township, like many others in the province has a rich political history.

During the dark days of apartheid South Africa, the colonial and apartheid regime forcefully removed the current residents of this township from Vaalwater and Ellisrus Towns.

The then regime did not want residents of this township to be part of the tourism, agriculture and the mining activities that characterised both Mogalakwena and Waterburg District Municipality.

It is therefore against this background that we have gathered here to salute and pay tribute to the struggle heroes and heroines of this area, for their selfless sacrifices they made for South Africa to be free,

We are indeed and will forever be indebted to the people of Steilooop Township, particularly the women and the girl child of this revolutionary township, that was founded as a result of apartheid forced removals.

We thank Steilooop people of that era for having provided a safe haven and protected our liberation fighters when they were fighting against the apartheid system.

We are saying that your dedication and resilience during that dark era, must propel the people of Limpopo to fight for socio-economic emancipation, that is driven by the National and Limpopo Development Plans.

We call upon you to assist government to instill hope and courage to all the women and the children of our country, who are living under difficult conditions of poverty, abuse, inequality, joblessness, and segregation.

Programme Director

This year marks 67 years since the watershed 1956 women's march which was one of the largest demonstrations staged in the country's history. It was underpinned by the adoption of the Women's Charter of 1954.

Today we are commemorating under the overarching theme: ***“Accelerating socio-economic opportunities for empowerment of women.”***

We are conscious of the fact that our country has made numerous strides in our quest to advance women socio-economic empowerment, we are saying that more still needs to be done.

The reality is that gender inequality still persists with more women than men mired in poverty and unemployment.

That is why government has decided that 2023 women month celebrations, should focus on interventions across government, civil society and the private sector to develop women in our nation.

Today is a special day in our country. The National Women's Day is about celebrating women.

Today we salute the courage and tenacity of all the women in our country.

Today we celebrate the achievements of women from all sectors of our society, in politics, in business, in their homes, in the villages, in the townships and suburbs, in the academia, in sports, today we celebrate all the women.

Programme Director

We celebrate the 2023 women's day with smiles on our faces. This is mainly due to the recent and historic performance of our national women's team Banyana Banyana at the World Cup Tournament.

They made us proud as a nation because for the first time in history, a South African soccer team was represented during the Round 16 stage, following their glorious success during the group stages.

We are indeed proud of these Queens of Africa and we warmly welcome them back home with much adorations, jubilations, festivity and deep sense of appreciation. Well done Banyana!

Programme Director

On this day of reflections and commemoration, I call upon all to women of Limpopo, with specific reference to women in business, women in politics, 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 salute you for being good mothers in your homes and your overall leadership roles in the various sectors of our economy and social strata is high commendable,

This government is committed towards ensuring that women are supported at all cost as we journey towards the economic recovery trajectory. Women in Limpopo, you are assured of our hand of support and tutelage.

Please strive for access to information, it is a reliable vehicle for growth.

Programme Director

This government has since made a commitment to support women owned business. During variety of platforms, we made clarion calls and called upon women who have an appetite for entrepreneurship to consider starting businesses.

It is against the above-mentioned background that we said, government support is 100 per cent available, our only request is for women to use all the available information communications technologies to link-up with relevant agencies and institutions.

Programme Director

In the same spirit, I am compelled to remind the gathering that it is 29 years since the advent of democracy in South Africa and as such, women's month commemoration is used not only to give hope to young people, however, we need to pronounce on the actual opportunities for women to improve the quality of their lives and unlock their full potential.

Having said that, we are conscious of the detrimental effects resulting from load-shedding and the rising unemployment figures in our country. Hence we are calling upon women to rise and reclaim their rightful position of leadership in society.

On this important note, that we have since committed ourselves to the noble idea of women and youth development. Therefore, we single out a series of empowerment projects available as part of the Limpopo Development Plan, guided by the Provincial Socio-Economic Recovery Plan.

As government we have tailored some initiatives to mitigate the challenge of women and youth unemployment.

Just to name but a few:

- The provincial government has since June this year directed all departments and entities, to fill the 4 thousand 500 hundred funded vacant posts in the provincial administration. Progress to date is that the process is unfolding seamlessly and we are hopeful that women, youth and people with disabilities are being prioritised.
- In addition, the provincial government has women and youth empowerment activities tailor made to propel women and young people to wage an economic struggle against unemployment, poverty and inequality.
- In the same context, the provincial government is championing a woman and youth friendly policy ecosystem that allows and guide our province towards key priorities that must be undertaken to empower and develop the youth.
- The Limpopo Youth Development Strategy and the Limpopo Preferential Procurement Strategy, are among the vehicles adopted by Limpopo for this purpose.
- in addition, the Recently, the ongoing construction of the first ever, multi facet, Limpopo Central Academic Hospital in Polokwane, serve as a much needed boost towards fighting women and youth unemployment.

- The construction of this Central Academic Hospital is estimated to create 1 thousand 2 hundred and 20 jobs during construction and a further 2 thousand 4 hundred and 61 full time jobs.

- Another milestone is the recently Limpopo Youth Fund, our collaboration with the National Youth Development Agency. The Limpopo Youth Fund is financing hundreds of youth entrepreneurs were 10 million rand have been set aside to support youth business initiatives.

- Furthermore, as Limpopo, we have since committed ourselves towards infrastructure development using the Musina Makhado and the Fetakgomo Tubatse Special Economic Zones as our catalytic projects. We urge women and youth to leverage opportunities that are available in these sectors.

- Furthermore, the implementation of the Industrial Parks Revitalisation programme in all the five districts of Limpopo, is creating over 6,000 jobs for the people of the province.

- We are also having a Human Capital Investment Strategy in place. The value of the strategy is to facilitate opportunities for women and youth with SETA's. On this note again, we are looking at the creation of hundreds of youth entrepreneurs.

- Similarly, we are pleased to report that, during the 2022/2023 financial year, we have exceeded our target for supporting SMMEs that helped sustained up to 1,000 jobs.

- In addition, a total of R4,4 million worth of loans were disbursed to support SMMEs and co-operatives. A total of just over 13,000 local enterprises received assistance throughout the province. We shall continue to support 100 SMMEs and 100 co-operatives in 2023/2024 financial year.

- In summary, please allow me to reiterate the call made by Premier Mathabatha during the Provincial Youth Day. He said all provincial government departments, its agencies and all municipalities, must ensure that they exhibit all the available empowerment opportunities at their disposal.

Programme Director

I felt it was befitting to mention these opportunities since we have committed ourselves to ensure that the fruits of democracy are tasted by everyone. That democracy become a lived reality and not just a distant.

Having said that, we are aware of the other challenge facing you as women. That is the unity of women.

We are calling upon women 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.

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

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 and the courts to deal harshly with perpetrators of women abuse.

Programme Director

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

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 South Africa.

I thank you!