

**REPLY BY THE PREMIER DR. PHOPHI RAMATHUBA  
TO THE DEBATE ON THE OPENING OF THE  
LEGISLATURE ADDRESS, LEBOWAKGOMO**

**08 AUGUST 2024**

Speaker of the Legislature, Honourable Makoma  
Makhurubetje

Deputy Speaker, Honourable Tebogo Mamorobela

Members of the Executive Council

Honourable Members of the House

Chief Whip of the Legislature, Honourable Essob  
Mokgonyana

Good morning, Avuxeni,

Honourable Speaker, we want to appreciate all the members of this house who participated during this robust debate, once more proving to all in sundry that under the ANC led government, democracy continue to thrive. We have taken notes of the progressive inputs and guidance as presented by both our Chief whip, Honourable Mokgonyana and Honourable Mokaba. Your words of wisdom have not fell on deaf ears but on men and women who collectively will implement for us to realise the battle of poverty, unemployment and inequality being won decisively.

I would like to particularly thank all the MECs who participated in the debate because whether it was. MEC Florance Radzilani, or MEC Dieketseng Mashego, or MEC Ernest Rachoene not forgetting MEC Basikopo Makamu, they all committed to strengthen our efforts in implementing programmes,

not just of their own respective portfolios which they are mandated to lead, but of all the clusters within the 7th administration

Honourable speaker

These men and women have already demonstrated on their capacity and commitment towards service delivery, some even shared with us creative initiatives be it Dikgeregere Wednesday which is operating in full swing and contrary to you Honourable Mapoulo and Honourable Wilson, this progressive initiative which is improving the quality of lives of our people, appreciated by people from all sectors be it farmers, school going children, educators in rural schools, nurses and EMS personnel in rural clinics is currently funded from within our fiscal . We are utilising our existing budget. We are using the current yellow

fleets operators and the existing yellow fleets to improve our rural roads , in his own words Kgosi Kgabo Moloto 111 who I spend the entire day with at Ga Mokgehle village on behalf of Bahlaloga said ' Nto e a senke re e bone kannete re a leboga re re le bakgonyana ba tla eterlla motse o wa bo rena, ba sa nonorege ka ditsela tja borena gore di senya mimotoro ya bona, re a reta mmoso wa borena ke wona mmoso o re o tsebang wa ANC'

So who are you and I Honourable Mapoulo not to embrace a programme celebrated by being Mabu, maaparankwe who rules more than 140 indunas with each sub village constitutes on average 500 households.

Honourable Wilson, your continuous negativity and prophet of doom mentality is not new, perhaps let me

remind you in our previous encounter as the MEC of health and you were part of those in the National Assembly, when we announced the first ever medical school , you said over not in your lifetime , today you are still here consuming oxygen and our first group of medical graduates have completed their two years internship already. When we pronounced our first ever Limpopo central and academic hospital similar questions of budgets were raised and today construction has began you are mum. We are just worried by the enemy of progress who mobilised our people, taking advantages of their unemployment status to disrupt the construction. We call upon all parties to meet and resolve the matter. Construction must resume for us to meet deadlines

Honourable Wilson as if it was not enough again when just last year we pronounced in this august house that we will procure and commissioned 566 ambulances, you said we are hallucinating, the 566 ambulances have been procured when commissioned you shift the goal posts and accused us of electioneering. I'm worried now as a fellow honourable member, do you still think people of this province will take you serious at this pace . Our MECs were directed to look within our budgets and they will do so and deliver

Soon to be launched Initiatives such as “family revitalisation programs’ as announced by MEC for social development is another confirmation that we are not sleeping on duty, we are a government at work that cares and loves it’s people. We call upon all

members of this house to rally behind this initiative which is meant to support and rebuild our family units because the reasons of all the social ills, manifesting in increased violent crime rate, is broken family units.

Equally it is ' Operation Bophelo pele' as announced by health MEC which will also encourages healthy life styles amongst our people starting with us Honourable members. We must reduce healthcare costs and heed the call by both MEC Mashego and Maseko of physical exercises. On the 9th August we are calling all citizens of this province to join the program organised by Sports arts and culture of a minimum 8km walk or run and after that don't stop just continue, you will thank us later.

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Chief Whip is quite right, our economy needs to be improved so that it can create more sustainable jobs. We are alive to the reality that our economy is not performing as we envisaged.

Honourable Mapoulo we are the first to acknowledge where we did not perform well like with regard to MMSEZ we further provided this house with a way forward on how to turn things around, on both SEZ we have given a directive to MEC for Limpopo Economic Development and Tourism Honourable Tshitekere Matibe to fast track the revitalisation of the two SEZs of Musina-Makhado and Fetakgomo Tubatse. unfortunately listening is a skill which some of us have been deprived of. With this imperative and game-changing projects we will be able to turn around the economic growth through job creation.



Adding to that, the MEC for Agriculture Honourable Nakedi Kekana and LEDET MEC, yesterday visited the Lebowakgomo abattoir, to monitor the progress.

Honourable Mapoulo, since our first day in office, as part of ensuring that we drive the job creation agenda, we have met with captains of industries and we continue to meet everyone who share our vision of building our province's economy , be it the Agricultural sector, the Mining sector, retail and trade sector. Captain of industries of amongst others Anglo Platinum, De Beers, Forskor, and Palaborwa Mining Community, have already been met and part of the agenda was beneficiation where the raw minerals can be processed in the province , that includes challenging experts within the platinum group minerals who complained about markets no longer showing interests in end products like catalytic

converters since they have moved into electric cars as a results of mitigation for climate change , to start looking for alternatives including medical devices.

Honourable, Speaker, this area of beneficiation will increase its potential for economic growth, development and job creation that will improve the livelihoods of our people.

Honorable MEC Makamu you are correct, we are excited to have inspired Honourable Mapoulo and Honourable Lulamile Jack that to a point that they even went out to mentioned other subsistence farmers who are doing well. That is a testimony that as a government we are on the ground and when we say these are our people, it's because we know them and we understand their struggles hence we are now

more than the word convinced to be on the right path when it comes to assisting our subsistence farmers in our province. We are encouraged by positive response from mainly commercial farmers to assist us in developing our subsistence farmers into commercial farmers .

Honorable Speaker, Honorable Wilson of the DA is misled, for her to continue on her divisive approach especially dealing with critical issues involving Agriculture which is the backbone of our economy, together with those of her mentality they think and even accuses us that we are not doing enough to reach out to the commercial farmers. Let me put it to you Honorable Wilson that we are not resting on our laurels, hence on a Saturday, you probably was resting with your family, we were meeting with the Modimolle Business Chambers amongst them was

also the chairman of Afriforum, these are Limpopians commercial farmers who heard our calls and appreciated our quest to meet them, they are on board to help us rebuild our economy through Agriculture They raised their challenges and the required interventions and the MEC for Agriculture will be working with them to resolve some of these issues. Contrary to your perceptions these farmers have pledged their commitment and willingness to capacitate black farmers, and advised on how we can start a joint programme with the likes of NTK to help our kids in rural and township schools to start learning the practical part of agriculture at the elementary level. So as compared to your conclusion of whether to laugh or cry after our speech on Friday , people out there are inspired and have welcomed the invitation to work with us, be careful at the end of the day, you might remain with no constituencies as a results of your negative energy

because people are tired of fighting, they want a thriving economy which will create jobs, reduce unemployment, fight poverty and cut the growing inequality gap.

Furthermore, they have indicated that in their quest of creating an enabling environment for collaboration with government, they have invited me to their provincial Agri-Limpopo conference taking place on 13 August 2024, where I will be addressing them, and this will for the first time that a Premier addresses a gathering of a such a nature.

My acceptance to this invitation to address the commercial farmers is to show that the ANC led government is an inclusive one, that caters for all racial groups Blacks, Indians, Coloureds and Whites, unlike you who prioritises commercial farmers over

our black and emerging farmers. The ANC government does not discriminate.

Honourable Speaker, we should mention that there are successful black commercial farmers in the sector. These are in cattle and strawberry farming. They are a living testimony and proof that agricultural activities remain an important sector for ensuring sustainable growth. Hunger does not know colour! On Monday I have been invited to visit some of these farmers to see the work that they do,

Because of the importance of last week's meeting with the farmers in waterberg, I have decided together with the MEC to have further engagements with other commercial farmers in all the other four districts of our province.

Honourable Speaker again Honourable Wilson, stood before this August House, throwing stones at us blaming our government for not caring, for failure to respond with speed to the potato frost disaster affecting mainly Bloubaerg, but also parts of vhembe and Sekhukhune . Honourable Wilson when that disaster struck unfortunately I was enroute to Cape Town for the opening of parliament however , what Honourable Wilson because of either ignorance or choice does not know is that the MEC for Agriculture Honourable Nakedi Kekana visited the affected areas immediately on 17th of July 2024 to take stock of the severity of the potato frost disaster. This was an unprecedented and proactive way in which our government reacted swiftly to the matter. I can confirm that the MEC and her team have already tabled a report before me on this matter, detailing the steps taken as guided by Section 23 (1)(b) of the Disaster Management Act and Section 12(1)(a) in the

case of a provincial disaster. As government we have therefore acted promptly and followed due process as prescribed by the law. We did not want to go to the farmers prematurely and pronounce on things that are not informed by the law.

Thus, we cannot entertain the political grandstanding the way Honourable Wilson has done in this House. It is also unfortunate that Honourable Wilson is playing a blame game and wanting to project this government as uncaring. For your information, the ANC led government cares about the citizens of this province, regardless of colour and gender, because this movement believes in creating a non-racial, no sexist, democratic and prosperous society.

My advice to you my fellow honourable member, honourable Wilson is to learn a thing or two from



honourable Marirz, who passionately stood here and made a plea on behalf of those farmers. If it's so difficult I can still use my profession to prescribe Prozac which can come in handy whenever you ascend the stage.

Honorable Marirz, We can confirm that we have already intervened. We are awaiting classification of these two disasters including the fire on Magoeba'skloof and Harnetzburg which, when it broke, woke me in the middle of the night because you care and we had to get Polokwane municipality to go and support Greater Tzaneen municipality that is why the ANC says "Let's do more together"

Madam Speaker, the Department of Agriculture will be conducting an audit of the total land claimed by communities. This audit will give us a clear indication

of what land is available for sustainable development. For the land that is laying fallow and underutilised, we will develop a programme to invite investors who are willing to invest in the rural development programmes, who in turn will train young and emerging farmers, thus contributing to job creation, which is a key factor of the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) priority number one.

Honourable Members, the issue of pit latrines is receiving attention in our province. Most of our schools currently are using Enviro Loo, which are more safer. The Basic Education department has also made strides in terms of the pit latrines.

Honourable Speaker, Honorable Kgothatso Mogoana of the EFF referred to a case of a learner at Lefatane

Primary School in Ga-Makgato Village that she claims fell into a pit latrine, let us correct you for unfortunately relying on street gossips for information instead of facts which is available for free within the department of basic education that actually learners were playing behind the Enviro loo and one was trapped in the cover of that enviro loo outside, hence no injuries reported.

The child survived because of the actual progress that we made towards eradicating pitlatrines because if it was still pitlatrines we would be speaking a different language. Honorable speaker because children will remain children and must play we have decided to enhance the safety of the Enviro Loo, by installing mash wires on the Enviro Loo lids.

Let us give credit where it is due because, had it been pit latrines, we would be talking of another death

case of a learner, in our hands within our school environment.

Honourable Members, when lies becomes pathological requiring medical intervention, it is when you believe in you own lies.

Honorable Kgothatso Mogoana, our track records on how we transformed department of health speaks volume, we inherited a department at a time under section hundred, not even sure if we could pay our employees salaries, operating from one financial bailout to another, today the department can pay even all its suppliers within 30days, the once disclaimed department is handed over as unqualified audit opinion, the 800 doctors you are talking about it's street gossip, we are actually one of the province that prioritised its professionals when they

completed their community service contractual obligations. We have appointed our nurses, doctors and other healthcare workers. Our treasury is now mandated to assist social development to see how we can appoint our social workers whom we also seriously need. . You cannot lie to the facts and statistics that is available for everyone to see.

Honorable Kgothatso Mogoana you also wants to know about our legacy in health and the answer is simply, Life expectancy improved under our watch, this province was leading in terms of maternal death and now, according to the latest report as announced by ministers advisory committee, we are counted among the top three performing provinces in terms of maternal death reduction. We can safely say that when mothers visit hospital for delivery, they are more safer than before.This is the province that

fought Covid 19 and recorded the least number of deaths comparatively speaking. We never lost a single member of this August house as a result of Covid 19 and that doesn't mean we were not infected, but because we had men and women within our public facilities who were there 24hrs to take care of people of this province. Rural and poor as we are we saved lives so Honorable mogoana that's our legacy

Honourable Speaker, water provision remains a priority for this 7th Administration. In response to dealing with water challenges, Honourable Kobodi of the UAT and again, Honourable Mapoulo, I am pleased to update the House on some of the projects that are completed and those nearing completion.

Two Projects have reached completion

1. Ndindani - 100% reticulated and bulk offtake connection is done

2. Ngove B - 100% reticulated and bulk offtake connection is not done

Seven Projects have reached practical completion:

3. Mhlaba Willem - 100% reticulated and bulk offtake connection is done

4. Bambeni - 100% reticulated and bulk offtake connection is not done

5. Homu 14A - 100% reticulated and bulk offtake connection is done

6. Homu 14B - 100% reticulated and bulk offtake connection is done

7. Nwakhuwani - 100% reticulated and bulk offtake connection is done

8. Risinga View A 100% reticulated and bulk offtake connection is not yet done

9. Mapayeni A - 100% reticulated and bulk offtake connection is not yet done

As I announced last week, we are taking bold step through the soon-to-be-launched water project, #HiNwaMatiFridays. We will use every Friday to launch water projects across the corners of our province.

Honourable Speaker, let me address Honourable Velile Cyril Jack of the MK party. I am disheartened by what the Honourable member has said, that we should not talk about our forebears. How can we forget our stalwarts because they made us to be who we are today. How can I not mentioned Mme Charlotte Mannya Maxeke, the first woman to graduate in a science, degree, the first woman to be accepted in an ANC NEC, mme Charlotte from Botlokwa who once said “ kill that spirit of self and do



not live above your people but live with them and if you rise bring someone with you so

How can I not raise Mama Lydia Komape and all those when they rise made sure they bring me and many of us in this house with them living up to the prophecy of their forebears Mom Charlotte Mannya. and of course they are smiling in their graves when they see the seed they planted growing, unlike some of you who betrayed the betrayed the movement, the revolution, the ANC, they did not even during challenging times, they stood the ground. Their blood remained black, green and gold, hence they departed within the ANC. May their soul continue to rest in peace!

On the other hand cde Chris Hani and Oliver Tambo must be turning on their graves when they see what

you and your likes have tried to established a look alike of their organisation, when they see their uniform being used to mobilise our people across tribal lines, the demon which they fought for their entire lives.

When Honorable Lulamile Jack pronounced the leader of his party to be recorded in the Guinness book of record, I wanted to warn him to be careful because failure to implement might lead into his surgically removal from this August house but also I was reminded that in the entire world, there was never a president of an organisation who even went to court to fight to remain a member of another party so on that note he stand a chance to succeed because a world record has been made

As I conclude, Honourable Speaker, as the ANC led government we are guided by the six priorities of our manifesto, directed by our three GNU priorities and informed by both National and provincial development plans to better the lives of our people. As this august House, we are seized with the responsibility of driving programmes that will foster inclusive growth, job creation, reducing poverty and tackling the high cost of living and build a capable, ethical and development state.

I still repeat my call to all those with skills who are scattered all over come help build your province of birth, or the province of your ancestors. Those Villages without water, those villages without roads made us who we are today. It is those schools without proper sanitation's that are responsible for laying a foundation for me and you to can read and write

today, it is in those clinics whose walls are cracking where we got our immunisations hence we escaped death as a result of preventable childhood illness'. it is time to give back hence my own saying 'it takes a child to raise the village'. Sons and daughters of Limpopo come and help transform our villages'

I thank you,

Kea leboga

Ndo livhuwa

Inkomu

Baie dankie