



# LIMPOPO

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**ADDRESS BY THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO DR PHOPHI RAMATHUBA  
ON THE OPENING OF THE LIMPOPO HOUSE OF TRADITIONAL AND  
KHOISAN LEADERS, GA-RAMMUPUDU TRADITIONAL COUNCIL,  
SEKHUKHUNE, 12 SEPTEMBER 2024**

Chairperson of the House, Hosi Ngove

Esteemed members of the Limpopo House of Traditional and Khoisan  
Leaders

MEC for Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional  
Affairs, Mr Basikopo Makamu

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

It brings me immense joy to be here with you today. This occasion is particularly significant because, for many years, this province has not witnessed a female Premier addressing the house of traditional leadership. In many respects, we are laying the groundwork for a more progressive Limpopo.

Program Director, it is fitting that we open this House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders during Heritage Month, a time when we reflect on the rich tapestry of our diverse cultures. Our traditional and Khoi-San leaders hold the key to preserving this heritage, ensuring that our young people not only learn from it but also carry it forward for future generations. Our heritage serves as a bridge to the past, offering insights into how our society has evolved. It allows us to reflect on our history, embrace our traditions, and cultivate a deeper awareness of who we are. More importantly, it helps us understand and appreciate the journey that has shaped us into the people we are today.

In previous speeches since I was inaugurated, I have paid tribute to the pioneers who paved the way for my journey in the liberation and empowerment of women. I have celebrated the remarkable leadership of individuals such as Thuli Madonsela, Lilian Ngoyi, Josephine Moshobane, Kgoshigadi Madinoge, Joyce Mabudafhasi, and many others.

Today, I also wish to honor a trailblazer in traditional leadership, the visionary Hosi Tinyiko Lwandlamuni Phillia N'wamitwa II. This extraordinary woman from our province faced prolonged legal battles initiated by a royal family member who argued against her right to lead due to her gender. Thankfully, the Constitutional Court ruled in her favour, confirming her position as the Senior Traditional Leader, Hosi of the Valoyi (N'wamitwa) people near Tzaneen in the Mopani District.

This decision overturned the apartheid-era practice of male primogeniture in traditional leadership succession, a custom deeply entrenched in the

Vatsonga/Machangana community. This historic ruling was not only a victory for Hosi N'wamitwa but also a significant triumph for all women, challenging patriarchal norms and affirming women's right to leadership.

Program Director, the Constitutional Court ruling in favor of Hosi N'wamitwa has set a transformative precedent for many female senior traditional leaders in our province. Today, we are proud to have 45 female traditional leaders across Limpopo, with 5 in Sekhukhune District, 2 in Vhembe, 4 in Capricorn, 7 in Mopani, and 1 in Waterberg. This progress is a clear indication that times are changing, and the patriarchal barriers that once hindered women's leadership in traditional roles are steadily being dismantled.

It is with great honour and a deep sense of responsibility that I stand before you today to mark the opening of the House for the 2024 financial year. Our gathering here is a sign of the enduring partnership between the government and traditional leadership, a partnership that is vital for the prosperity and cultural integrity of our beloved Limpopo Province.

Limpopo is a province rich in cultural heritage, with two kingships and one queenship, and 203 traditional communities. We recognise 168 senior traditional leaders, with 35 vacancies that we are committed to filling. Our province is home to 2111 recognised villages, supported by 1851 headmen and headwomen, with ongoing efforts to replace 260 of these positions. These numbers reflect not just statistics, but the heartbeat of our communities, the custodians of our traditions, and the leaders of our people.

The government remains steadfast in its commitment to providing the necessary tools of trade and administrative support to our traditional leaders. This support is crucial in promoting cooperative governance and fostering partnerships between local government and traditional institutions.

However, we acknowledge the challenges posed by budget constraints, which have hindered the appointment of new personnel in various traditional councils, leaving 155 vacancies. We are actively engaging with national processes to develop standardised structures for all traditional councils, ensuring that our practices are consistent and effective across provinces.

In terms of logistical support, out of the 163 vehicles procured, 105 have been delivered, with the remaining 58 expected by the end of October 2024. We understand the frustration caused by these delays and are working diligently to resolve them.

Since 2014, over 25 traditional council offices have been constructed and refurbished. However, budget reductions have impacted our ability to meet our construction targets. Despite these setbacks, we are proud that all but one project from the previous financial year have reached practical completion. We are addressing the delays caused by contractor performance to ensure timely delivery of these essential facilities.

In Mopani, we face challenges with the constitution process, where the Senior Traditional Leaders have not approved the proposed forum structure. We are committed to resolving this issue through continued dialogue and intervention, ensuring that all traditional councils are constituted by the

deadline of 05 February 2025, as mandated by the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act (TKLA).

The participation of traditional leaders in municipal councils, as provided by Section 81 of the Municipal Structures Act, remains a critical issue. The amendments brought by the TKLA have limited this participation, and we have raised these concerns with the Minister, advocating for amendments that will allow broader representation.

We are also addressing the disputes and claims on traditional leadership, with 58 cases currently registered. The establishment of a Provincial Investigative Committee, as approved in March 2022, is a significant step towards resolving these disputes efficiently. We are committed to capacitating the Tradition, Culture, and Customs (TCC) committee to enhance its research capacity and broaden its scope beyond dispute resolution.

Despite the challenges, Limpopo continues to lead in supporting traditional councils, providing offices, furniture, vehicles, and staff. Our Draft Provincial Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Bill is a benchmark for other provinces, highlighting the integral role of traditional leaders in land use management.

Program Director, as government, we are fully aware of the challenges facing our traditional leadership across the province. In response, we have made the decision to host a Bosberaad/retreat with our traditional leaders from 21 to 23 September 2024. It is imperative that we move away from relying on

the courts to address our issues. Instead, we must continuously seek collaborative and constructive ways to resolve our challenges together.

In conclusion, while we face challenges, our commitment to supporting traditional leadership remains unwavering. We must continue to work together, government and traditional leaders, to ensure that our communities thrive, our traditions are preserved, and our province prospers. Let us move forward with unity, purpose, and determination.

Thank you.