



# LIMPOPO

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## **Speech by Premier of Limpopo Dr Phophi Ramathuba at the Limpopo Skills Conference, 27 November 2024, Bolivia Lodge, Polokwane**

Programme Director  
Provincial Commissioner of the South African Police Services  
Deputy Minister of the Department of Higher Education and Training  
Representatives of the Limpopo House of Traditional Leaders  
MEC for Education  
MEC for Social Development  
MEC for Transport & Community Safety  
CEO of the National Skills Authority  
Director General of Limpopo  
Heads of Departments  
Labour Unions  
Business Leaders  
Members of the Media  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Thobela  
Goie more  
Dumelang  
Avhuxeni  
Ndi Matsheloni  
Lotjani  
Molweni

Today stands out as one of those days filled with hope. As you look outside nature seems to confirm that this gathering is budding beginning of a great future of our province. The light green leaves have decorated all trees and the surface as you traverse the length of our province. New beginnings and fresh hope are what we are about today.

We are delighted as the 7th Administration to host the inaugural Limpopo Skills Conference. This gathering marks a pivotal moment in our journey towards economic growth and job creation, aligning with the strategic focus of our government of national unity.

In a world where skills development is no longer a luxury but an urgent necessity, we stand committed to addressing the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

Our province, Limpopo, is blessed with a competitive advantage in mining, agriculture and tourism. These sectors are the bedrock of our economy and our focus is on beneficiation - transforming these raw materials into finished products to drive industrialisation. Through mineral beneficiation, agro-processing and renewable energy, we aim to harness our comparative advantage to create jobs and stimulate economic growth.

The institutional framework for skills development in Limpopo is robust. Our Limpopo Development Plan (LDP) and Human Capital Strategy are aligned with the national skills development strategy, ensuring a cohesive approach.

We have a functional chapter of the Limpopo Human Resources Development Council (HRDC), where key partners and stakeholders, including labour, higher education institutions and government, collaborate to drive our skills agenda.

Our strategic priorities in skills development are clear. We are committed to building an ethical and developmental state through partnerships with institutions on Senior Management Services and middle management capacity development programmes.

These initiatives focus on strategic management and leadership development, ensuring that our leaders are equipped to navigate the complexities of modern governance. Collaboration in research and development, particularly with universities, is also a cornerstone of our strategy.

Limpopo has consistently performed well in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) subjects and these remain our priority. We are also focusing on the development of focus schools, particularly in agriculture and mathematics, to further enhance our educational offerings.

Identifying priority skills for economic development, such as 4IR and related skills, is crucial. We are addressing issues in the built environment, engineering, strategic management, leadership and research to prepare for the future of work.

Our strategic partnership with the Department of Higher Education and Training is vital. Initiatives like the Giyani TUT Campus and the proposed mining school in Sekhukhune are key to our skills development strategy. It for this reason that we believe that at the conclusion of this conference we should find a concrete programme of action on this.

We welcome the decision to convene this skills conference as a strategic initiative to cultivate the priority skills our economy needs. We expect the HRDC to develop a well-resourced plan, monitored on a half-yearly basis, to ensure effective implementation.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are gathered here at a time when the world is still grappling with the aftermath of COVID-19. The pandemic's impact on job losses is still felt in our province. This conference is crucial for re-evaluating our workforce's skillset, identifying deficiencies and devising strategies to address them.

According to the third Quarterly Labour Force Survey for 2024 by Stats SA, Limpopo's official unemployment rate has unfortunately increased, and youth unemployment remains a significant challenge.

This demands collaborative, integrative, and evidence-based strategies to ensure our higher learning institutions produce graduates who are fit for purpose.

The main objectives of this conference are to increase investment in education and training, improve workforce productivity and employability, enhance service provision and craft strategies to mitigate skills shortages.

This conference is not a mere talk show; it is a call to action. We must dedicate our resources to addressing the skills deficiencies in our province.

As we embark on this journey, let us leverage the Special Economic Zones in Musina-Makhado and Fetakgomo-Tubatse to achieve our developmental aspirations.

Higher learning institutions must adapt their curricula to meet the demands of the ever-changing world of work. The envisaged Sekhukhune Mining Academy, Giyani TUT Campus, and other institutions must reimagine their roles in this new landscape.

Technical and Vocational Training (TVET) Colleges are essential in this endeavour. They offer industry-relevant training, bridging the gap between education and work, and preparing students for entrepreneurship. This is what our country demands now.

As we commence this mammoth task, let us be ready to delve deeper into the issues. By the end of this conference, we should have clear recommendations, focus areas, and reasonable timelines for implementation.

I urge all commissions to apply their knowledge, expertise and wisdom to ensure this conference becomes a springboard for a well-resourced workforce in our province.

In conclusion, let us embrace this year's theme: "Advancing Skills Development for Inclusive Growth." Together, we can build a brighter future for Limpopo and its people.

Thank you.