

RESPONSE BY LIMPOPO PREMIER DR PHOPHI RAMATHUBA TO PRESIDENT RAMAPHOSA'S STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS

12 FEBRUARY 2025

Madam Speaker

His Excellency President Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa

Esteemed members of this assembly, and fellow South Africans,

Today, I rise with both gratitude and determination as we reflect on the state of our nation.

First, we honour the brave soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice for peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Among them, eight were from Limpopo. We extend our deepest condolences to their families and pledge to uphold the values they fought for - stability, security, and a better future for all.

As I stand before you, I am reminded of the marula tree, whose fruit is now in season across our province. Its branches bend downwards, inviting us to reach up and partake in its nourishment. This is the essence of leadership - we must extend opportunities to those below while ensuring that all benefit from our shared resources.

LIMPOPO: A PROVINCE ON THE RISE

Limpopo is poised to be at the heart of South Africa's global engagement. Hosting key G20 meetings - on agriculture, financial architecture, the digital economy, and health - this positions our province as a driver of sustainable development. Our Marula belt in Mopani, alongside the 70% of Kruger National Park within Limpopo, will showcase our natural beauty and rich heritage to the world.

Mr President, we welcome your decisive focus on water security. For years, our communities have struggled with water shortages. We appreciate your recognition that many rural municipalities lack the financial and technical capacity to ensure sustainable water supply.

We have engaged the Department of Water and Sanitation to find practical solutions, particularly in Polokwane Municipality, where water and infrastructure challenges persist. Our Executive Council is finalising a water provision strategy to ensure every municipality can meet both economic and social needs in alignment with your interventions.

INFRASTRUCTURE & ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

Reducing the cost of living in rural areas is key to unlocking economic growth. Your R940 billion infrastructure investment plan is a game-changer. For too long, apartheid spatial planning left rural communities disconnected from economic opportunities. This

investment will reshape our province - connecting people to jobs, markets, and essential services.

Public-private partnerships are proving effective. The near-completion of the Steelpoort Bridge, built in collaboration with the mining sector, is a testament to what we can achieve when government and business work together.

LIMPOPO IS LEADING SOUTH AFRICA'S RENEWABLE ENERGY REVOLUTION

When we met with you and your Cabinet in November 2024, you committed to supporting renewable energy. We are pleased that in April 2025, we will invite you to switch on electricity for 400 households in Musina Municipality - off the grid, powered by solar and battery storage, with 5G connectivity.

The R120 billion pledged at our 2024 investment conference is materialising. Mining companies in Fetakgomo-Tubatse are pioneering solar energy projects, while the first six solar-powered electric vehicle charging stations along the N1, and seven more on the N11, are coming online soon.

At the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Industrial Park, companies are operational, creating jobs and stimulating local economies. The full optimisation of the SEZ will be transformative. We are not waiting for opportunities; we are creating them.

STRENGTHENING HEALTHCARE & EDUCATION

Healthcare is a pillar of our development agenda. The long-overdue revitalisation of Siloam Hospital is finally happening, and the Limpopo Central Hospital, currently under construction, will redefine healthcare in our province.

A capable state starts with skilled people. We welcome the initiative to capacitate TVET colleges. The Sekhukhune Mining Academy, endorsed by local communities and the royal family, will equip our youth with skills to thrive in the sector.

Education is the foundation of economic empowerment, and we must ensure that Limpopo's youth are prepared for the jobs of the future.

A PROVINCE ON THE MOVE

Limpopo is no longer at the tail end of Matric results. We have moved from last place to 6th nationally, achieving an 85.01% pass rate. Our goal is clear - we are aiming even higher in 2025.

We are also in the final stages of eradicating pit latrines in schools, ensuring that no child suffers the fate of young Michael Komape ever again.

Our commitment to a capable, ethical, and developmental state is unwavering. We are strengthening local government capacity, investing in roads and infrastructure, and ensuring that municipalities can effectively serve our people.

Mr. President, fellow leaders, let us extend our branches, like the marula tree, to uplift those in need.

Let us ensure that every South African can reach for the fruits of opportunity, prosperity, and dignity.

Thank you.