

SPEECH BY LIMPOPO PREMIER DR. PHOPHI RAMATHUBA DURING A VISIT TO
KAMOGELO MOKOENA, A TALENTED MOUTH ARTIST, GA-MAAKE

31 JANUARY 2025

To the Mokoena Family,
Mopani Municipality District Executive Mayor Cllr, Pule Shai,
Greater Tzaneen Municipality Mayor Cllr Gerson Molapisane, Members of the
Community,
Our Artist Kamogelo
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Avuxeni, Ndi masiari, Thobela, Good afternoon, Goie dag

Art is the language of the soul, a bridge between generations, and a mirror reflecting the beauty, struggles, and triumphs of humanity. It transcends time and space, telling stories that words often fail to capture.

Through a simple stroke of a brush, a chisel on stone, or a melody in the air, art speaks. It inspires revolutions, preserves history, and breathes life into dreams. Today, we gather to celebrate an extraordinary young artist whose talent and resilience have captured the hearts of many, Kamogelo Mokoena.

Kamo, a 20-year-old gifted mouth artist, has demonstrated that talent knows no boundaries. His remarkable ability to create intricate portraits with precision and passion serves as a powerful reminder that dreams are valid regardless of the circumstances we are born into.

Programme Director, Disability must never be seen as a barrier to success. It is not the absence of ability but rather the presence of a different kind of strength, resilience, and determination. Around the world, we have witnessed young people living with disabilities breaking barriers and achieving greatness in various fields, including sports, arts, academia, and business.

The Paralympics, for example, have showcased phenomenal athletes who have defied the odds, bringing home medals and making their countries proud. Right here in South Africa, we have inspiring figures who have risen to prominence despite physical limitations, proving that with the right support, determination, and opportunities, no dream is out of reach. The likes of Sheryl James, Ntando Mahlangu, Natalie Du Toit, Khothatso Monjane, to mention but a few.

Kamo's extraordinary talent is yet another reminder that greatness is not determined by physical ability but by passion, perseverance, and a belief in one's potential.

His work, particularly the striking half-portrait of me drawn by the roadside, has touched many and spread far beyond our province. It is evidence to the boundless potential that exists within our people, especially young individuals living with disabilities.

Our visit today is not just to commend Kamo but to encourage him and many others who live with disabilities. We want to send a strong message that their dreams are within reach, and their talents are valuable. Disability does not define one's future, determination, perseverance, and community support do.

Ladies and gentlemen, our society must embrace and uplift people living with disabilities. Parents, guardians, and the broader community play a crucial role in ensuring that talented individuals like Kamo receive the support they need to thrive.

We must cultivate an environment where every person, regardless of their physical abilities, feels empowered to contribute to society. Discrimination and exclusion must have no place in our communities.

As a provincial government, through the Department of Sport, Arts, and Culture, we are committed to creating opportunities for artists. We recognize that artistic expression is not only a cultural treasure but also a viable economic driver.

That is why we will continue to support initiatives that promote artists and ensure that the creative industry is a space where talent is nurtured and transformed into sustainable livelihoods. We are working towards building an environment where artists can access resources, markets, and platforms to showcase their work.

Programme Director, Art has the power to change lives, to elevate individuals from economic hardship, and to shape the identity of a nation. It is a key driver of social and economic development, capable of positioning Limpopo as a hub of artistic excellence.

We must therefore treat art not as a pastime but as an essential pillar of our society, one that creates jobs, tells our stories, and inspires future generations.

I urge the community to take art seriously as a game-changer. We must support and invest in artists, for in doing so, we uplift not only individuals but the entire society. Kamo's journey should inspire us all to recognize and nurture the talents around us.

Let us hold each other up, celebrate each other's strengths, and create a world where everyone, regardless of ability, can achieve their dreams.

Thank you.