



# LIMPOPO

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## **CONGRATULATORY SPEECH BY THE MEC FOR SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE MR JERRY MASEKO ON BEHALF OF THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO DR PHOPHI RAMATHUBA AT THE LAUNCH OF DR MATHEWS PHOSA'S BOOK: *MATHEWS PHOSA, WITNESS TO POWER – POLITICAL MEMOIR***

***University of Limpopo, 25 April 2025***

Mr Vice-Chancellor  
Deputy-Vice Chancellor  
Executive Deans of Faculties  
Dr Mathews Phosa and his family members  
Members of the Limpopo Executive Council who are here.  
Members of Parliament  
Members of the Provincial Legislature  
Judge Presidents  
Veterans of our struggle  
Esteemed colleagues  
Distinguished guests  
Scholars and friends

Today, we gather at the venerable University of Limpopo, a cradle of intellectual pursuit, to celebrate not just the launch of a book, but the unveiling of a narrative that is both personal and profoundly national. "Mathews Phosa: Witness to Power" is an autobiography that transcends the individual, offering us a window into the soul of a nation in various stages of transition.

Autobiographies hold a unique place in the literary and historical canon. They are, as post-colonial theorists suggest, acts of

reclamation - tools through which individuals assert their agency, protest the erasures of the past and inscribe their names indelibly into the annals of history.

In the context of our nation, autobiographies serve as powerful instruments of narrative reclamation, allowing voices that were once marginalised to redefine the contours of our collective memory.

Dr Mathews Phosa stands as a towering figure within the myriad political spectrum of South Africa. His journey from the heart of Limpopo to the forefront of our national democratic revolution is a evidence of his unwavering commitment to justice and equality. His role in the negotiations that facilitated South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy underscores his dedication to the principles of dialogue and reconciliation.

In examining the broader landscape of South African political autobiographies, we find parallels with luminaries such as Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki, who have similarly used their narratives to reclaim history and reshape the national discourse.

These autobiographies are not mere recollections; they are acts of defiance and declarations of identity, challenging the narratives imposed by colonial and apartheid regimes.

Dr Phosa's memoir is a rich tapestry that weaves together the personal and the political. It is a narrative that aligns seamlessly with the aspirations of the 7th Administration of Limpopo, which is steadfast in its quest to create jobs, stimulate economic growth and reduce the cost of living, all while building a capable and developmental state. His story is a beacon of inspiration, reminding us of the power of resilience and vision in the face of adversity.

The contents of "Witness to Power" offer a profound insight into the life of a man who has worn many hats - from Premier of Mpumalanga to Treasurer General of the African National Congress. The memoir delves into his experiences in governance, his contributions to the economic and social fabric of our nation and his unwavering commitment to the ideals of freedom and equality.

It is a narrative that captures the essence of a man who has been both a participant and a witness to the unfolding story of our democracy.

The Department of Sport, Arts and Culture is encouraged to see such a dedication of an author that falls in line with its projects of instilling confidence in all writers to continue documenting history in many forms. We shall continue to support writers, authors and artists who are creatively weaving stories of their lives as they mirror our daily existence. To that extent we have been supporting the library project by building new ones. Books like these would find a space in our modern libraries.

In conclusion, let us celebrate not only the launch of this remarkable memoir but also the enduring legacy of Dr Mathews Phosa. His contributions to our nation have been transformative, and his narrative serves as a testament to the power of the written word in shaping our collective consciousness.

Dr Phosa, we thank you for your service, your wisdom and your unwavering commitment to the betterment of our society.

Thank you.