

SPEECH BY LIMPOPO PREMIER DR. PHOPHI RAMATHUBA
IN HONOR OF THE LATE SELAELO REGINAH MPHAHLELE,
MAHWELERENG, MOKOPANE

26 APRIL 2025

Program Directors,
The Mphahlele and Ramatla Families ,
President of the Economic Freedom Fighters
Speaker of the Legislature, Dr Makoma Makhurupetje,
Former Premier and Deputy minister Mr Chupu Mathabatha who is also
provincial chairperson of the ANC
Members of the legislature
Secretary of the legislature
Friends and Relatives,
Fellow Mourners,

Thobela, Ndi Matsheloni, Avuxeni, Good morning, Goie more.

We gather here today under heavy clouds of sorrow. The sun seems a little less bright. The air is a little thicker. Because today, Limpopo mourns not just a public servant but a beacon of humility, a woman of steel wrapped in silk, our own mother, colleague, comrade, and leader, Ms. Selaelo Reginah Mphahlele. Dimamzo as she was affectionately known to me.

She did not walk softly into leadership, but she strode in, grounded in principle and focused on purpose. She stood tall without shouting. She served the people of Limpopo not for applause but out of duty.

Her commitment to the cause of justice, dignity, and service was not loud. It was resolute. She was not just a politician. She was a public servant in the truest, noblest sense.

"Death, be not proud," said the poet John Donne. For today, we defy your finality with memory. We resist your silence with the echo of a life that spoke volumes. Death may have claimed her physical being, but her work, her legacy remains deeply rooted in the communities she loved and served.

Ms. Selaelo Reginah Mphahlele was a tireless member of the Limpopo Provincial Legislature. Deployed by the Economic Freedom Fighters, she served her party and this province with great integrity from May 2019 until her untimely departure. Within our legislature, she contributed immensely through various portfolios—Transport and Community Safety, Treasury, and the Standing Committee on the Quality of Life, Status of Women, Youth, and People with Disabilities.

Programme Director, Ms Selaelo was not a ceremonial occupant of seats, reduced to clapping hands and praise singing leadership, she however filled them with depth, with intellect, and with compassion. She was deliberate and very professional in her engagement with issues. She was never about grandstanding. All she wanted was to know if the people had water, if the roads were safe, if patients in hospitals were treated with dignity. Hers was politics of substance, not optics.

Even during the 6th administration, when I was still serving in the Health Department as an MEC, she would call me not to discuss party lines or political strategies but about patient care.

That was her character: service before self. Politics for her was never a last resort; it was a sacred calling rooted in love for people.

Programme Director, let it be known, today and forever, that Ms. Mphahlele believed in education, not as a badge of honor, but as a tool of empowerment. She did not stumble into politics because there was nowhere else to go. She came from the classroom. An educator. A deputy principal. A builder of minds. Her journey reminds us all, especially the youth, that education remains the cornerstone of leadership. That learning and leadership must go hand in hand.

Most of the MPLs will bear testimony that her debates in the Legislature were never shallow. She stood to speak for the voiceless, those who still fetch water with buckets, those who queue at clinics without medication, and the youth who wake up every day to unemployment and despair.

Her passion was the transformation of our province, the betterment of our people's lives, the building of an inclusive and thriving Limpopo.

To her, holding the executive accountable was not a political sport, but it was a democratic duty. She was courageous but never combative. She spoke truth to power not to offend but to uplift. To her colleagues, she was a unifier, bridge-builder, contributor, and listener.

As Maya Angelou said, "A great soul serves everyone all the time. A great soul never dies. It brings us together again and again." Ms. Mphahlele was indeed a great soul. Her greatness lay not in grand speeches but in her ability to listen, to care, to act.

We are here today not just to mourn her but to learn from her. From her humility. From her relentless commitment to the people. If we walk away from this gathering unchanged, then we have missed the message of her life.

Let this not be a final chapter, but a beginning. Let those who remain in the Legislature walk taller, speak truer, and serve deeper because they have walked beside her. Let her legacy guide our steps as we confront the very issues she dedicated her life to: poverty, inequality, unemployment, and underdevelopment.

To the Mphahlele family, we say thank you. Thank you for sharing her with us. Thank you for allowing her to serve beyond your household and into the hearts of Limpopo.

To the Economic Freedom Fighters, we recognize the jewel you have lost. May you honor her by producing more like her, who leads with heart, humility, and honesty.

To her colleagues in the Legislature, the message is clear: politics must return to its original purpose, service to the people. Let us lift the flag higher in her honor.

Ms. Selaelo Reginah Mphahlele, your footprints are carved into the corridors of our democracy. Your voice still echoes in the chambers you once graced. Your legacy lives in the streets, clinics, schools, and communities you so dearly loved.

You have fought a good fight. You have finished the race. You have kept the faith.

Go well, daughter of the soil.

Go well, gentle giant.

Rest now, knowing you have served your people with honor.

Rest in eternal peace.

Thank you.