

Speech by Limpopo Premier Dr Phophi Ramathuba at the Post-Budget Retabling Roundtable Discussion, Fusion Boutique Hotel, 03 June 2025

Programme Director,
Speaker of the Legislature, Dr Makoma Makurupetje,
Deputy Speaker of the Legislature, Ms Tebogo Mamorobela,
Members of the Executive Council,
Members of the Legislature,
Capricorn District Executive Mayor, Cllr Mamedupi Teffo,
Polokwane Municipality Executive Mayor Cllr John Mpe
Makgoshi a rena led by Kgoshi Mphahlele,
Leaders of Faith Based Organisations,
Captains of Industries, Business Community,
Professionals and Academics,
Members of the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thobela, Ndi madekwana, Ri perile, Good evening, Goie naand.

Thank you all for gathering here today after the re-tabling of the budget at the legislature. Your presence reflects a shared commitment to our province and I am grateful for your engagement in this vital discussion.

We find ourselves at a pivotal moment in Limpopo's history, one that demands our collective efforts and vision. Today, we have an opportunity to connect and remind ourselves of the transformative power of partnerships. Throughout history, partnerships have shaped and changed the fortunes of

nations; we intend to harness this potential to grow a Limpopo that works for all.

As part of the 7th Administration, we have long recognised the potential that Limpopo holds—the potential that many have referred to as the province's “sleeping giant.” Isn't it time that this giant wakes up? The time for slumber has surpassed what we can afford - we are here to awaken the great potential identified in sectors such as mining, agriculture and tourism.

We are also acutely aware of our three priorities: growing the economy, creating jobs, and fighting poverty while curbing the high cost of living for our citizens. It is imperative that we transition from discussion to action.

As I was coming here, I was reminded of an expression in Tshivenda: “Munwe muthihi a tusi mathuthu,” which loosely translates to “a finger alone cannot scoop boiled mealie grains from the pot.” This principle emphasises our basic need for collaboration; as other languages express similar sentiments, it becomes clear that survival and success cannot be achieved in isolation. Understand here that the basic tenet is that of survival that cannot be done by an individual. Even if you were to listen to the Tsongas/Machangana that would still carry the same meaning of no one can survive alone: “Ritiho rin'we a ri nusi hove” (one finger does not nuzzle the fish). The Northern Sotho take even further saying that “monwana o tee a go rone nta” (a single finger would not kill a flea). It is for this reason we thought this sleeping giant requires a lot of us to come together and awaken it. By coming together, we can rouse this sleeping giant.

Today, we presented a budget of approximately R88.9 billion for the 2025/26 financial year. While this budget is significant, it is but a starting point. The provincial economic growth has faced challenges, hovering below one percent of GDP for an extended period. This sluggish growth has resulted in persistent socio-economic issues, as we grapple with poverty, inequality and high unemployment rates. Just a quarter ago we lost about 50 000 jobs.

A key factor in this is our low conversion of economic opportunities, primarily because we rely heavily on primary industries rather than value-added activities. We must explore opportunities within the mining and agricultural sectors while striving to increase the manufacturing sector's contribution to at least 5 percent or more. Manufacturing has proven multiplier effects, such as job creation and increased income from value-added products.

The Limpopo Development Plan for 2025-2030 lays the foundation for our economic framework, emphasising key sectors like mining, agriculture, tourism, manufacturing and renewable energy. These strategic pillars align with our province's abundant natural resources and our goal of transforming our economy.

Recently, we strategised on improving our investment portfolio, keeping in mind the challenging global economic landscape, especially concerning trade wars. With so much potential, we must ask ourselves - why are we not seeing the results we desire?

We are seeking foreign direct investment to foster job creation and ensure that local businesses benefit from the associated skills for beneficiation. It is

for this reason that we shall be engaging South Africa's partners in BRICS to unlock potentials that we have oft spoken about.

We are working diligently to eliminate obstacles hindering the Musina-Makhado Special Economic Zone, ensuring all approvals are in place to foster growth in that area. In Fetakgomo-Tubatse, we have finalised the public participation for designation, allowing us to move forward decisively.

However, we face challenges, particularly in water provision. By leveraging our skills and resources optimally, we can overcome these hurdles before seeking additional funding.

We also acknowledge the challenge posed by over 13,500 kilometres of unpaved strategic roads, which necessitate significant financial investment. This is an area where we need all of us - government, business, and communities - to collaborate.

I am grateful for the support we are receiving from partners eager to expand our renewable energy efforts. This investment could potentially increase our electricity output to nearly 100%. I urge you - our business partners and investors - to match this enthusiasm and collaboration.

As we prepare for the next investment conference in a few months, let us view it as an opportunity for local businesses to unite under a shared vision - a vision that allows us to create more jobs and implement practical offerings that will transform the landscape of our province.

Together, let us seize this opportunity to build a Limpopo that works for all.
Thank you.