



LIMPOPO

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

PREMIER'S OPENING ADDRESS AT THE EXCO LEKGOTLA, FUSION BOUTIQUE HOTEL, POLOKWANE

27 February 2026

All Members of the Executive Council
Director General, Mr Nape Nchabeleng
Premier's Special Advisors
Head of Departments
Chief Executive Officers
Municipal Managers
Chief Financial Officers
Other senior managers
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ndi Matsheloni, Thobela, Avuxeni, Good Morning, Goeie More!

Over the past two months, floods have tested Limpopo's resilience, our infrastructure, our response systems, and the very dignity of our people. Families have been displaced, homes destroyed, roads washed away, schools interrupted and clinics affected. The pain is real and it is current. Our people are not watching government from a distance; they are waiting for government at the doorstep.

This Lekgotla therefore is not a routine strategic planning session. It is a command council. It must produce decisions, timeframes, responsibilities, and measurable outputs. And above all, it must produce a united government voice - one plan, one message, one standard of execution - because we head to the State of the Province Address on 05 March 2026 and immediately thereafter we move into the 2026/27 financial year.

Today I want to give marching orders on three fronts: recovery, delivery and inclusive growth - all anchored on building a capable, ethical developmental state.

In terms of the recent floods, we need to think and action flood recovery based on speed, integrity and visible impact. The combined support now on the table, provincial resources and national disaster support, may amount to R1.6 billion, a little far from what we have projected. However, this is not just funding. It is a test of leadership and a test of ethics.

Our directive is clear: Prioritise life-line infrastructure first: access roads, bridges, water and sanitation systems, electricity restorations, schools, clinics and emergency services routes. No community must remain cut off because paperwork is slow.

Every rand must be traceable: Provincial Treasury must lead a transparent financial control framework for disaster funds - ring-fenced projects, clear procurement plans and weekly expenditure and progress dashboards.

Zero tolerance for disaster profiteering: we will not allow “flood tenders” to become a new language of corruption. Where we detect collusion, price inflation, ghost work, or poor workmanship, we must act decisively - cancel, recover and prosecute.

Build back better: recovery must not recreate the same vulnerability. Roads, bridges, storm-water systems and human settlements must be rebuilt with climate resilience in mind. The rains have exposed weaknesses; let us fix them properly.

Director General, we would want each affected department to present a 30-60-90 day Recovery Action Plan, with project lists, locations, costs, timelines, procurement routes and responsible officials. Not intentions, just actions.

This is our first EXCO Lekgotla since the adoption of the Limpopo Development Plan (LDP). By now, no member of this administration can claim uncertainty about our strategic priorities. The LDP commits us to a growth trajectory of 2.2% per annum, to reduce unemployment to below 20% by 2030, to accelerate basic services and to upscale the social wage - centred on quality health services and quality education.

The strategic vision is clear. The question is whether we can translate it into the lived experience of people in Sekhukhune, Mopani, Vhembe, Capricorn and Waterberg.

The message from the recent Presidency Lekgotla is blunt: South Africa has adequate policies. The weakness is implementation. We disappoint our people not because we do not know what to do, but because we fail to do it consistently, quickly and ethically.

So the directive for this Lekgotla is: implementation with precision, and implementation with ethics.

On our part we have also stabilised the machinery of government: All provincial departments have permanent Heads of Department and accounting officers. Most have permanent CFOs. Most provincial entities have permanent CEOs and CFOs and boards have been duly constituted, with outstanding ones nearing conclusion. In short, the leadership gaps are closing.

Therefore, colleagues, we have no excuse. Decisions taken at EXCO must be followed through without delay and the administration must execute with discipline. We will measure performance, and we will enforce consequence management where there is failure, negligence or misconduct.

Our ambition as the 7th Administration has always been clear: inclusive growth that can be felt - jobs created, cost of living reduced and services improved through a capable state.

We are encouraged that the economy is responding. The last three quarters have shown a material improvement, including a significant reduction in

unemployment over 6%. We must not waste this moment. We must multiply it.

This means that we must scale up economic cluster catalytic projects - not as announcements, but as implementation programmes with bankable pipelines.

Align the provincial catalytic initiatives to national imperatives. We are already seeing this with Musina Makhado Special Economic Zone and Fetakgomo-Tubatse Industrial Park being emphasised in national cluster plans.

The Extended Cabinet Lekgotla raised concerns that the MMSEZ was mismanaged. The directive from national government is to put measures in place to accelerate business operations. We have gone to the ground at Musina-Makhado to verify progress. We are satisfied with the work underway on bulk infrastructure and execution of plans. We have a new CEO with deep built-environment expertise. Our instruction is simple: turn infrastructure progress into investor confidence, into operational readiness, and into jobs.

Treasury, LEDA and the MMSEZ must present to EXCO a clear operational acceleration plan - including governance controls, timelines for enabling infrastructure, investor pipeline management and risk mitigation.

There has been affirmation, at national level, of the proposal for the Limpopo–Gauteng High Speed Rail Link. DGs have met. An MOU will be signed with the National Department of Transport taking the lead, followed

by the feasibility study. This project is about logistics efficiency, industrialisation and opening markets. Transport and Economic Development must provide an integrated roadmap and governance model to avoid delays.

The Lekgotla of government also spoke frankly about the state of local government - white paper review, readiness for next year's local government elections and the risk of deterioration where basic services fail.

Let us be clear: people can no longer be asked to live without basic services. We must not take constitutional mandates for granted.

Therefore:

- CoGHSTA, Treasury and all sector departments must table a systematic intervention plan to stabilise governance, improve revenue collection, enforce credit control, improve technical capacity and ensure reliable water, sanitation, roads and refuse removal.
- Municipal Managers must be supported - but also held accountable - to manage transitions and keep municipalities functioning.
- We must root out systemic corruption and maladministration. If we build state capacity at local level, we win back public confidence.

On education, we must stop measuring ourselves by meetings held and start measuring by results achieved. Education must present a focused plan for measurable improvements in learning outcomes in the next EXCO meetings; Expansion and quality strengthening of ECD; A practical programme for

school sport and the creative sector that has real, developmental and economic impact.

Health and Social Development must bring forward plans that protect the poor, especially in flood-affected areas: continuity of care, psychosocial support and restoration of services.

Finally, we must enter 2026/27 with full alignment Annual Performance Plans must align with budgets, budgets must align with SOPA priorities, SOPA priorities must be supported by Budget Votes. Procurement plans must be ready early, credible and compliant - no last-minute deviations that invite irregularity and delay delivery.

We have reaffirmed our commitment to pay legitimate outstanding debts owed to entities and suppliers, and to adhere strictly to allocations. Provincial Treasury must drive expenditure monitoring with quarterly cash-flow projections and early warnings - so that we do not discover problems when it is too late to correct them.

Colleagues, as we approach SOPA, we must speak in unison with the people on the ground. Let us avoid two temptations: exaggerating achievements, or minimising challenges. Limpopo people are not asking for poetry, they are asking for progress they can see.

This Lekgotla must therefore produce:

- A credible flood recovery programme with strict controls;
- A sharp implementation programme for LDP priorities;

- Acceleration plans for catalytic projects;
- A practical, time-bound intervention plan to fix local government;
- And full alignment of planning, budgeting and performance for 2026/27.

Let this be the year we prove that a capable, ethical developmental state is not a theory. It is a daily practice - measured in rebuilt bridges, working taps, safe roads, functioning municipalities and jobs for our people.

I expect disciplined participation, honest reporting and decisive action.

Let us get to work.