

SPEECH BY PREMIER DR PHOPHI RAMATHUBA AT THE HANDING OVER AND SOD TURNING CEREMONY OF ROAD D1589, DE VREDE TO TAAIBOSCH, BLOUBERG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

25 FEBRUARY 2026

Programme Director,

MEC for Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure, Mr Ernest Rachoene,

Executive Mayor of the Capricorn District, Cllr Mamedupi Teffo,

Mayor of Blouberg Local Municipality, Cllr Maria Thamakga,

Traditional Leaders represented by Kgoshi Kibi and Kgoshi Mamadi,

Chairperson of the Roads Agency Limpopo Board, Mr Moses Tseli,

Chief Executive Officer of Roads Agency Limpopo, Mr Makhitha Chesane,

Members of the media,

Members of the De Vrede and Taaibosch communities,

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

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

We are gathered here today in a defining moment for the people of De Vrede, Taaibosch and the broader Blouberg community. We are here to officially hand over the contractor and turn the sod for the upgrading of Road D1589, a five-kilometre stretch that carries with it the hopes, aspirations and daily realities of our people.

This project, valued at R55 million and scheduled for completion within 12 months, represents a clear demonstration of our commitment to improving the lives of our communities. It represents progress in action. It represents hope made visible. And most importantly, it represents a promise fulfilled.

Road D1589 is not just a road. It is a lifeline. It connects families. It connects workers to opportunities. It connects learners to schools and patients to healthcare facilities. It enables farmers to transport their produce to markets and allows small businesses to grow and thrive. When we invest in roads, we invest in economic participation, in dignity, and in opportunity.

The upgrading of this road has been made possible through a Memorandum of Agreement signed between Roads Agency Limpopo and De Beers Venetia Mine in September last year. This partnership reflects a new and practical approach to development, one where government and the private sector work hand in hand to accelerate service delivery.

As a government, we recognise that we cannot and should not work in isolation. The challenges we face of unemployment, inequality and underdevelopment require collaboration. Public-private partnerships are no longer optional; they are essential. When government and business join forces, we are able to mobilise greater resources, accelerate infrastructure rollout, create jobs, stimulate local economies and improve the quality of life for our people.

This partnership model ensures that economic activity within our province directly benefits surrounding communities. Mining operations take place in our villages and towns; it is only correct that the fruits of that economic activity contribute to local development. Through agreements such as this one, we are ensuring that development is inclusive and that no community is left behind.

I want to commend the Limpopo Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure under MEC Ernest Rachoene for driving sustainable infrastructure development across our province. The signing of Memoranda of Agreement with six mining companies during the recent Mining Indaba signals that this partnership model is gaining momentum. It means more roads will be upgraded. It means more communities will be connected. It means more opportunities will be unlocked for our people.

Infrastructure development is one of the strongest catalysts for economic growth. Without reliable road networks, rural economies remain trapped. Poor road conditions increase the cost of doing business, discourage investment and limit mobility. By upgrading Road D1589, we are removing barriers to economic participation and opening doors for growth within Blouberg Municipality and the Capricorn District.

To the people of De Vrede, Taaibosch and surrounding villages, this project is about you. It is about safer travel for your families. It is about reliable access to essential services. It is about restoring dignity to communities that have waited patiently for development. It is about ensuring that rural communities enjoy the same standard of infrastructure as urban areas.

Importantly, this project will also create temporary employment opportunities during the construction phase. We expect the appointed contractor to prioritise local labour and subcontracting opportunities. Skills transfer and community empowerment must form part of this project's legacy. When construction ends after 12 months, the impact of this investment must continue through improved skills, local capacity and strengthened small businesses.

As we turn the sod today, we are not merely initiating construction work. We are making a collective commitment.

A commitment that this project will be delivered on time.

A commitment that it will meet the highest quality standards.

A commitment that public funds and partner contributions will be utilised responsibly and transparently.

A commitment that development will not bypass rural communities.

Accountability and oversight will remain central throughout the implementation of this project. Roads Agency Limpopo will monitor progress closely to ensure that every rand invested yields tangible results for our people.

Let this sod-turning ceremony symbolise more than the breaking of ground. Let it symbolise the breaking of historical patterns of underdevelopment. Let it signal a future where rural communities are fully integrated into the economic mainstream of our province.

We are building more than roads. We are building connectivity. We are building access. We are building resilience. And ultimately, we are building the future of Limpopo.

The success of this project will depend on continued cooperation between government, our private sector partners, traditional leadership, municipal leadership and the community itself. Development is most sustainable when communities take ownership and protect the infrastructure that is delivered to them.

As a Provincial Government, we remain committed to ensuring that infrastructure investment continues to reach every corner of our province. Our vision is clear: a Limpopo that is connected, accessible and economically vibrant. A Limpopo where geography does not determine opportunity. A Limpopo where development is inclusive and transformative.

Let us move forward together, united in purpose, united in action and united in our determination to build a better future for all.

I thank you.