

WELCOME REMARKS BY PREMIER DR PHOPHI RAMATHUBA DURING
THE LIMPOPO HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
MEETING, SEKHUKHUNE TVET COLLEGE, ELIAS MOTSOLEDI LOCAL
MUNICIPALITY, SEKHUKHUNE DISTRICT

15 APRIL 2026

Members of the Executive Council, Executive Mayor of Sekhukhune District,
Cllr Minah Bahula,

Mayor of Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality, Cllr David Tladi,

Director-General, Mr Nape Nchabeleng,

HODs

LHRDC members,

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

In the heart of service to our people, where resilience meets opportunity and where the hopes of our people continue to rise above the challenges of yesterday, we gather not merely as representatives of government and stakeholders, but as partners in a shared mission. Today is a decisive moment of reflection, alignment and renewed commitment to building a capable and skilled Limpopo.

This important provincial engagement follows the reconstitution of the LHRDC held in Phalaborwa at Letaba TVET College in the third quarter of the 2025/26 financial year, reaffirming government's commitment to strengthening skills development coordination as a driver of inclusive economic growth, industrialisation and job creation.

We meet at a time when our province, like the rest of the country, continues to confront the pressing challenges of unemployment, inequality and the urgent need to match education and skills development with the realities of our economy. These challenges call upon us not to act in silos, but to act in unity, with clarity of purpose and a deep sense of urgency. The Human Resource Development Council remains one of our most important platforms to ensure that planning, coordination and implementation of skills development are responsive to the needs of our people.

At the centre of this work is a simple but powerful truth: no province can grow beyond the skills of its people. It is for this reason that we must continuously strengthen the alignment between education, training and the labour market. Our goal must not only to produce qualifications, but to produce competencies that open doors of opportunity, drive economic growth and empower our communities to participate meaningfully in the economy.

Fellow members of the Council, we have deliberately taken the decision to bring Members of the Executive Council (EXCO) into this platform because we believe that leadership must not be distant from the lived realities of our people. By bringing Members of the Executive Council to this platform, we are ensuring that they are exposed to the real challenges and opportunities within our communities. This will assist departments to better align their programmes with the skills required to drive economic growth, while ensuring that government services reach our people where they are most needed.

The sitting today is symbolic, practical and necessary. It allows us, as the collective leadership of government, to listen, to engage and to respond with greater precision. It ensures that when EXCO members return to their respective departments, they do so with a deeper understanding of the skills landscape, the gaps that exist and the opportunities that must be unlocked.

This Council is a vital bridge between government and key stakeholders in the education and training ecosystem. Our universities, TVET colleges, Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and private sector partners play a critical role in shaping the skills pipeline of our province. Through this platform, we are able to strengthen coordination, avoid duplication and ensure that our collective efforts are directed towards common outcomes.

We are particularly encouraged by the role of institutions of higher learning and skills development partners who continue to work with us to expand access to training opportunities. However, we must also be honest with ourselves that much more still needs to be done to ensure that young people are not left behind in a rapidly changing economy driven by technology, innovation and global competition.

Our focus must therefore be sharpened on areas such as artisan development, digital skills, agriculture, infrastructure development and entrepreneurship. These are sectors that hold the potential to absorb labour, stimulate local economies and restore dignity to our young people through meaningful employment and self-reliance.

Equally important is the need to ensure that our skills development system is responsive, agile and inclusive. It must be a system that speaks to rural communities, townships, and urban centres alike. It must respond to the needs of both the unemployed youth and those seeking to upskill or reskill in order to remain relevant in the labour market.

Today's meeting must also focus on the strategic priorities for the current term of administration, including the Sekhukhune Mining and Minerals Beneficiation Academy. This initiative was directed by President Cyril

Ramaphosa following the Presidential District Development Model visit to Sekhukhune in 2023, in response to community calls for skills development opportunities to unlock local economic development.

We are grateful that Government has since established a technical task team and steering committee to coordinate the project, while Services SETA has agreed to support the planning and construction phases. A feasibility study is currently underway at the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Special Economic Zone, with completion expected by September 2026. A draft Memorandum of Understanding is being finalised and work has begun to develop a curriculum for implementation in the 2027 academic year.

As we deliberate, let us do so with honesty, with urgency and with a shared commitment to results. Let us move beyond planning for the sake of planning and instead focus on implementation that changes lives. The people of Limpopo are not waiting for promises they are waiting for opportunity, dignity and meaningful participation in the economy.

Allow me to conclude by reminding all of us that the future of Limpopo will not be determined by the abundance of our natural resources alone, but by the strength of our human capital. If we get skills development right, we unlock everything else—economic growth, social stability and a better quality of life for all our people.

Let this Council therefore be a space where ideas are translated into action, where collaboration is strengthened and where every decision taken moves us closer to a skilled, inclusive and prosperous Limpopo.

Together, let us rise to this responsibility and ensure that no one is left behind.

I thank you.