

# BUDGET VOTE SPEECH: OFFICE OF THE PREMIER PRESENTED BY PREMIER DR PHOPHI RAMATHUBA

05 May 2026 | Lebowakgomo Legislature

Speaker of the Legislature Honourable Dr Makoma Makhurupetje  
Deputy Speaker of the Legislature Honourable Tebogo Mamorobela  
Chief Whip of the Legislature  
Chairpersons of various Committees  
Members of the Executive Council  
Members of the Legislature  
Leaders of political parties  
Members of the Religious fraternity  
The Director General and all Heads of Department  
Members of the media  
Ladies and Gentlemen

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

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

Today we table this Budget Vote not as a matter of routine, but as a firm statement of intent. It affirms that the Provincial Government of Limpopo will not drift into complacency, will not fracture under pressure and will not falter in fulfilling its constitutional mandate to serve our people.

This Budget Vote reflects a government that is deliberate in its actions, disciplined in its approach and unwavering in its commitment to building a capable, ethical and developmental state. It speaks to our resolve to ensure that every resource entrusted to us is directed towards improving the lives of our people, strengthening institutions and advancing inclusive economic growth.

Madam Speaker,

Let me reiterate that the mandate of the Office of the Premier remains that of strengthening coordination, driving accountability and ensuring that departments deliver services that are impactful, efficient and responsive to the needs of our communities. To achieve these objectives, Madam Speaker, the Office of the Premier operates through three core programmes: Corporate Management Services, Institutional Development and Support, and Policy and Governance. These programmes form the backbone of governance in our province

Programme 1: Corporate Management Services – Administration

Madam Speaker,

Our work under Corporate Management Services is guided by the principles of efficiency, accountability and inclusivity.

We continue to make progress in advancing employment equity. Women currently occupy 48% of senior management positions, a slight underachievement due to retirements and terminations, but still a strong indication of our commitment to gender transformation. Representation of persons with disabilities stands at 3%, reflecting progress, while reminding us of the need to continue creating opportunities for inclusion.

We have maintained a consistent record of 100% payment of suppliers within 30 days. This is not merely a compliance exercise; it is a deliberate intervention to support businesses, sustain livelihoods and stimulate economic activity across the province.

In advancing transformation through procurement, the Office has exceeded targets for women and youth, with 68% of procurement directed to women-owned enterprises and 31% to youth-owned businesses. While we have not yet met the 2% target for persons with disabilities, we are strengthening interventions to ensure that this gap is addressed.

We must candidly acknowledge that limited awareness around supplier database registration remains a significant challenge, particularly among persons with disabilities. Too many are still excluded from economic opportunities not because of the lack of ability or potential to contribute, but because they do not have access to the necessary information and processes required to participate in supply chain systems.

In response to this reality, Madam Speaker, the Provincial Treasury has embarked on targeted roadshows aimed at empowering persons with disabilities with critical knowledge on supply chain management and available opportunities. These interventions mark an important step forward in advancing inclusion, expanding equal access and ensuring meaningful participation of all our people in the economy.

Our expenditure performance remains strong at 98.7%, with a clear target to improve to 99.5%, ensuring that resources are utilised optimally and efficiently.

Madam Speaker, we are proud to report that the Office of the Premier has achieved a clean audit outcome for two consecutive years. This reflects sound financial management, strong internal controls and a culture of accountability that we are determined to sustain.

To sustain these achievements, for the 2026/27 financial year, Programme 1 has been allocated R179.842 million.

Programme 2: Institutional Development Support

Madam Speaker,  
A capable and developmental state requires strong institutions, effective leadership and disciplined systems.

I am pleased to report that all critical leadership positions — MECs, Heads of Department and Chief Financial Officers — are fully filled. This ensures stability, strengthens accountability and enhances service delivery across the provincial administration.

We have prioritised the induction of leadership to ensure alignment with constitutional mandates and government priorities.

As a collective, we are united in our purpose, clear in our direction, and committed to working as a cohesive team to drive development.

To strengthen financial governance, we have established a provincial committee led by the Director-General, working closely with MECs and Heads of Department to drive clean audit outcomes, reduce irregular expenditure and improve financial discipline across departments.

Madam Speaker,

We have made significant progress in managing the Compensation of Employees (COE). Over the past decade, COE has been reduced from 72% to 64% of the provincial budget, creating fiscal space for infrastructure, service delivery and economic development. The implementation of the Early Retirement Programme (ERP) and the Voluntary Exit Programme (VEP) has further strengthened this effort.

As of April 2026, 470 officials have exited the public service in the province through this programme, creating opportunities to bring in younger talent and critical skills, while maintaining fiscal sustainability.

Advancing Transformation, Skills and Economic Empowerment

Madam Speaker,

If we are to confront unemployment and inequality meaningfully, we must invest decisively in the capabilities of our people.

The Office of the Premier has already supported a R136 million skills development programme over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework. This programme focuses

on artisan development, technical skills training, entrepreneurship support and recognition of prior learning. It is designed to equip our people with the skills required to participate meaningfully in the modern economy.

The Limpopo Youth Fund has exceeded expectations in its pilot phase, supporting 164 enterprises owned 100% by youth [young entrepreneurs] through funding and training. This initiative will be expanded in the coming financial year, providing more young people with opportunities to enter the mainstream economic sector.

We are also advancing the establishment of the Sekhukhune Mining and Beneficiation Academy, which will provide sector-specific skills aligned to the mining value chain. This initiative is a strategic intervention to address unemployment, poverty and underdevelopment, while unlocking the economic potential of our province.

In addition, 12 young people from Limpopo have been awarded international bursaries by Education, Training and Development Practices [ETDP] SETA to study engineering, mathematics and new energy technologies in China. This represents a forward-looking investment in innovation, science and the future of our province.

#### Inclusive Development and Social Transformation

Madam Speaker,

The Office of the Premier will continue to maintain inclusive development across all programmes.

We remain committed to ensuring that women, youth, persons with disabilities and military veterans are not marginal participants, but central beneficiaries of government programmes. Inclusive governance means designing interventions that respond to real challenges faced by our people and ensuring that no one is left behind.

We recognise that women continue to bear the burden of poverty and gender-based violence, that young people face barriers to employment and opportunity and that persons with disabilities encounter systemic challenges that must be addressed. That is why we are strengthening targeted skills development, expanding community-based support programmes, improving access to services and ensuring that inclusion becomes a measurable outcome across all departments.

#### Integrity, Anti-Corruption and Public Trust

Honourable Members,

The people will not trust government if they believe it is captured by corruption. Integrity must be visible. Ethics must be practical. Accountability must be real.

That is why we will implement integrity and anti-corruption roadshows in partnership with law enforcement agencies, municipalities, state institutions and civil society.

These initiatives will reinforce a culture of zero tolerance for corruption across the province.

Madam Speaker, the vetting of eight Heads of Departments, seven Chief Financial Officers and officials within the public entities is already underway, with five Heads of Office having successfully undergone this process. At the same time, lifestyle audits have commenced across departments, reinforcing our commitment to transparency and ethical conduct. The Special Investigating Unit has also intensified its work, taking concrete actions where wrongdoing is identified.

We want to make it unequivocally clear: all officials serving in strategic supply chain management positions will be subjected to rigorous vetting and lifestyle audits. This is a deliberate intervention to close the space for corruption, strengthen accountability and restore public trust.

As a province, we must continue to strengthen our collaborative efforts to combat corruption through the effective use of reporting mechanisms such as the anti-corruption hotline, supported by oversight institutions including the Public Service Commission.

These platforms enable citizens and public servants to report unethical conduct safely and confidentially.

Public service must never be treated as a private opportunity. It is a public trust.

For the 2026/27 Financial year, Programme 2 has been allocated R 271.789 million.

Programme 3: Policy and Governance

Madam Speaker,

We have made significant progress in strengthening planning, coordination and governance across the province.

The Limpopo Development Plan 2025–2030 has been finalised, providing a clear and integrated roadmap for development. It articulates a bold vision of a province that is resilient, inclusive and prosperous.

All departmental Annual Performance Plans have been assessed and found to be credible, ensuring that planning is aligned with priorities and capable of delivering results.

We continue to support municipalities through targeted interventions. The stabilisation of water supply in key areas such as Polokwane demonstrates the impact of coordinated governance. The establishment of the Provincial Water War Room and approval of a differentiated water strategy mark critical steps towards addressing water challenges sustainably.

The recent convening of the Water Summit on the 30 April 2026 by President Cyril Ramaphosa in Boksburg, which brought together Premiers, Mayors from across the country, marked a decisive national intervention to confront the country's water challenges, with urgency and accountability to ensure reliable and safe water supply to our people.

As a province, we fully align ourselves with the outcomes of this important gathering. In practical terms, we are already giving expression to these commitments by calling on our municipalities to establish war rooms that will respond to immediate water

challenges and ensure that our communities progressively gain access to clean and safe drinking water.

#### Our Development Mission

Madam Speaker,

The Limpopo Sustainable Livelihoods Fund, with a proposed investment of R60 million, represents a bold step towards transforming livelihoods.

This Fund will support women, youth and persons with disabilities through labour-intensive, community-based and enterprise-led initiatives. It will promote agro-processing, rural infrastructure development, green economy projects, cultural tourism and digital innovation.

This is our integrated response to promoting sustainable livelihoods through enterprise development, skills training and expanded economic participation.

This is how we move from poverty to possibility. From exclusion to opportunity. From dependence to dignity.

#### Disaster Management and Infrastructure Resilience

Madam Speaker,

In response to recent floods, R88.8 million has been disbursed to municipalities to support recovery efforts, with projects expected to be completed by August 2026. However, our responsibility extends beyond response to prevention.

We must invest in resilient, climate-smart infrastructure. This includes constructing roads, bridges and houses that can withstand extreme weather conditions, strengthening drainage systems, enforcing building standards and integrating disaster risk assessments into all planning processes.

This is how we protect lives, safeguard livelihoods and build a province that is prepared for the future.

#### International Relations and Stakeholder Coordination

Honourable Members, the Office of the Premier continues to strengthen partnerships beyond our borders, both globally and within the African Continent. We are deepening relations with three provinces in China- Anhui, Henan and Shanxi as part of our broader international cooperation agenda. In the SADC region, we also have ties with the four regions of Namibia namely Omusati, Oshana, Ohangwena, Oshikoto, as well the Matebele Land, North and South provinces and the of Zimbabwe-Matebelele Land and the Gaza Province of Mozambique. These partnerships are aimed at promoting trade, facilitating skills exchange and attracting investment to support economic growth and development in our province.

Honourable Members, in light of the evolving geo-political tensions in regions such as Middle East, it is imperative that we, as a province, begin to think differently and broaden the scope of our international relations by exploring new strategic partnerships. The current global environment has demonstrated how quickly shifts in international relations can impact trade and flows. We have also witnessed instances where the imposition of increased tariffs on goods by some countries has placed significant strain on many economies, disrupting trade and limiting growth opportunities.

At the same time, in order to effectively win the battle of service delivery, it is imperative that we strengthen our intergovernmental Relations [IGR] forums and ensure the full implementation of the District Development Model [DDM]. This will enhance coordination, integration and alignment across all spheres of government, enabling a more unified and efficient approach to service delivery.

This becomes even more critical as we approach the electoral period, following the announcement by the President that the elections will be held on the 4 November 2026. Against this backdrop, it is essential that we intensify collaborations through both IGR structures and the DDM, strengthening planning and execution and ensure that service delivery remains consistent, uninterrupted and responsive to the needs of our communities during this period and beyond.

For the 2026/27 Financial year, Programme 2 has been allocated R 201.900 million.

#### Budget Allocation

Madam Speaker,

For the 2026/27 financial year, the Office of the Premier has been allocated R653.531 million, distributed as follows:

56% to Compensation of Employees

41% to Goods and Services

1% to Transfers and Subsidies

2% to Capital Assets

An amount of R190.747 million has been allocated to priority projects, including digital transformation initiatives such as electronic content management, digital signatures, ICT infrastructure upgrades and shared services.

#### Conclusion

Honourable Members,

The Limpopo Development Plan 2025–2030 gives our province a bold vision: a Limpopo that is resilient, vibrant, and prosperous, inspired by its diverse and creative people.

That vision will only be realised if government works differently — more integrated, more ethical, more disciplined, and more responsive.

So let this Budget Vote be a promise to the people of Limpopo:

That their government will be coordinated.

That their administration will be professional.

That their leaders will be accountable.

And that their province will move forward with purpose.

This Budget Vote is not just about numbers, but it is about building a capable state, restoring trust and delivering real change in the lives of our people.

I therefore present this Budget Vote for consideration by this House.

I thank you.