

EULOGY BY PREMIER DR PHOPHI RAMATHUBA DURING THE
FUNERAL OF MRS MURETHI ANNAH RAMATHUBA AT HA MASHAMBA
VILLAGE, COLLINS CHABANE MUNICIPALITY, VHEMBE DISTRICT

06 JUNE 2026

Programme Director,
The Ramathuba Family,
Thovhele Vho Mashamba,
and other Traditional Leaders,
Faith-Based Leaders,
Community Members,
Fellow Mourners,

Ndi matsheloni, Avuxeni, Thobela, Good Morning, Goeie More.

I stand here utterly helpless, stripped of my armour, forced to realise that all our collective strength cannot call back the woman who gave us life, leaving us to mourn the devastating truth of a world without her.

Indeed, a majestic tree has fallen and the thunder of its crash echoes far across the landscape of our broken hearts. For seventy-seven years, our mother stood as our canopy, anchoring our family with deep, immovable roots and sheltering us beneath the gentle shade of her unconditional love.

Now, the skies above us are suddenly bare and we are left shivering in the cold, hollow clearing of her absence, listening to the agonising ring of a silence that feels too heavy to bear.

How cruel and unyielding is death, an enemy that strikes with absolute indifference to our desperate pleas. Surprisingly, death does not steal the withered or the unloved; it ruthlessly targets the most vibrant, anchoring souls among us, the special people whose light makes the world worth navigating.

Yet even as tears fill our eyes today, we find comfort in the remarkable life our mother lived. Her journey was not measured by wealth or status, but by the countless lives she touched, the values she instilled and the sacrifices she made for those she loved.

As a devoted member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Southern Africa and an active member of the Women's Prayer League, she understood the power of prayer. Through prayer she found strength in difficult times, hope in moments of uncertainty and courage to face every challenge that life placed before her. She prayed for her children, her grandchildren, her community and her country, believing firmly that God remains the ultimate source of guidance and protection.

She knew that our nation is currently walking through difficult and troubling times. Every day we are confronted by painful stories of Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, where women and children continue to suffer abuse, violence and untimely death. In the face of these challenges, her life calls upon us to return to the values of faith, compassion and human dignity.

Today, we call upon our faith-based leaders and all people of goodwill to continue praying without ceasing for our province and our country, so that together we may overcome these social ills and build communities that are safe, caring and united.

Programme Director, our mother was not only a woman of faith; she was a woman of action. She understood that prayer and hard work go hand in hand. Every day she would wake up determined to provide for her family. Through her small business outside the school gates, she transformed modest earnings into opportunities for her children and grandchildren.

When the school bell rang, learners would flock to her stall to buy sweets, fruits and other treats. What many saw as a simple informal business, to her it was a powerful expression of a mother's love and sacrifice. Through those daily earnings, she put food on the table, supported her family and ensured that her children never lost hope in a better tomorrow.

Her resilience teaches us that dignity is not determined by the size of one's income but by one's willingness to work honestly and tirelessly to uplift those entrusted to their care. She never allowed adversity to define her circumstances; instead, she confronted every obstacle with courage, determination and grace.

Today, we also celebrate her vibrant spirit and her love for community life. We will forever cherish the sight of her participating in the old ladies' soccer club, running, laughing and sharing joyful moments with her peers. She demonstrated that ageing is not a burden but a blessing, one that should be embraced with purpose, health and enthusiasm.

Programme Director, one of her most admirable qualities was her commitment to lifelong learning. Even in her later years, she enrolled in ABET classes because she understood that education remains the key that unlocks opportunity and human potential. She refused to allow age to become an excuse. In doing so, she left us with a powerful lesson that learning never ends and that knowledge remains one of life's greatest treasures.

As we observe Youth Month, her life challenges us to encourage our children to remain in school, pursue education and prepare themselves for a future that demands knowledge, innovation and resilience. That would be one of the greatest ways to honour her memory.

To the children, grandchildren, relatives and the entire Ramathuba family, may you find comfort in knowing that your mother lived a meaningful life. The greatest monument we can build in her honour is not one of brick and stone, but one built through unity, love, faith and service to others.

Programme Director, our mother believed in building a better nation and she would want us to actively shape the future she always prayed for. She understood that strong families build strong communities and that strong communities build a strong nation.

As we prepare for the Local Government Elections scheduled for 04 November 2026, let us embrace that responsibility with the same sense of duty and commitment that she displayed throughout her life. I therefore encourage all those who are eligible to ensure that they are registered to vote and to exercise their democratic right when the time comes.

By participating in these elections, we become active contributors to the future of our municipalities and our communities. In doing so, we honour the values of responsibility, service and community-building that our mother lived by every day of her life.

Indeed, our mother fought her fight, she ran her race with dignity and she kept the faith until the very end. She leaves behind a legacy of unwavering faith, resilience in the face of adversity, love for family, commitment to education and dedication to community upliftment.

Though her voice has fallen silent, her wisdom will continue to guide us. Though her hands have come to rest, the seeds she planted will continue to bear fruit for generations to come. Though she has departed from our sight, she will forever remain present in our hearts, our memories and in the values she entrusted to us.

Vha edele nga mulalo Mugwena, Shumbula, Muila, Lithuga, Muroga Medzi, Nwedzhi ya Masingo.

Ndo livhuwa, naho zwi sa livhuwi.