

WELCOME REMARKS BY LIMPOPO PREMIER DR PHOPHI RAMATHUBA, DURING THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT'S ENGAGEMENT WITH TRADITIONAL LEADERS AT THE RANCH RESORT, POLOKWANE MUNICIPALITY, CAPRICORN DISTRICT

12 JUNE 2026

Programme Director,  
Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa, Honourable Paul Mashatile,  
Minister of Land Reform and Rural Development, Mr M Nyhonto,so,  
Deputy Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Rev Prince Z Burns-Ncamashe,  
Deputy Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Mr S Zikalala,  
Deputy Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Dr Dickson Masemola,  
Deputy Chairperson of the National House Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders, Nkosi L Mavuso,  
Provincial Chairperson of the Limpopo House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders, Hosi Peni Ngove,  
Deputy Chairperson of the Limpopo House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders, Kgoshi B Rammupudu,  
Members of the Executive Council,  
Executive Mayor of Capricorn District Municipality, Cllr MM Teffo,  
Acting Executive Mayor of Polokwane Municipality, Cllr D Moloto,  
Executive Mayor of Vhembe District Municipality, Cllr, M Chauke  
Senior Traditional Leaders, Faith-Based Leaders,  
Members of the Media,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

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

It is a great honour and privilege to welcome the Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa, Honourable Paul Mashatile, to this important engagement with traditional leaders in the beautiful province of Limpopo.

We gather here today conscious of the rich history that defines our province and our nation. We meet as descendants of great kings and queens who defended the dignity, culture, land and freedom of their people against colonial conquest and oppression. We pay tribute to the enduring legacy of Khosi Tshilwavhusiku Makhado, Kgoshi Mampuru II, the revered Rain Queen Modjadji and many other distinguished traditional leaders whose courage, wisdom and sacrifice continue to inspire us in our quest to build a better South Africa.

Limpopo is a province blessed with breathtaking landscapes, abundant natural resources and a rich cultural heritage. It is the proud home of the Vhavenda, Bapedi, Vatsonga, AmaNdebele, Khoi-San communities and Afrikaners, who together form a vibrant mosaic of cultures and traditions. Our diversity remains one of our greatest

strengths, and traditional leadership continues to play a pivotal role in preserving this heritage while promoting social cohesion and unity among our people.

Programme Director,

Today's engagement is both timely and significant. It reflects government's commitment to strengthening collaboration with traditional leadership as an indispensable partner in governance, development and social transformation. The institution of traditional leadership remains one of the oldest and most respected pillars of our society. Long before the advent of modern government structures, traditional leaders provided governance, resolved disputes, safeguarded community resources and ensured social stability within their communities.

Today, traditional leaders continue to serve as custodians of culture, heritage and communal land. More importantly, they remain the trusted voices of communities, particularly in rural areas where the majority of our people reside. Their role extends beyond ceremonial functions; they are active participants in shaping the social and economic future of our province.

The Seventh Administration is deliberate in ensuring that traditional leadership occupies its rightful place within the governance architecture of our province. Our priorities as government include strengthening governance and administration, accelerating economic growth, expanding infrastructure development, promoting justice, enhancing safety and combating crime. These priorities cannot be achieved without the meaningful involvement and participation of traditional leaders.

As we gather today, we remain deeply concerned about the persistent challenges confronting our communities. Poverty, unemployment, inequality and underdevelopment continue to affect many households across our province. These challenges are particularly evident in rural areas, where communities look to both government and traditional leadership for solutions and hope.

The future of our province depends on our collective ability to transform rural communities into centres of economic activity, investment and sustainable development. We must work together to unlock opportunities in agriculture, tourism, mining, manufacturing and the green economy. We must ensure that women, young people and persons with disabilities become active participants and beneficiaries of economic growth.

Traditional councils are empowered by law to enter into developmental partnerships with government, investors and civil society organisations. These partnerships must be structured in a manner that protects community interests and ensures that local people derive meaningful benefits from development initiatives taking place on their land. Development should never happen at the expense of the communities it is intended to uplift.

As government, we remain committed to supporting traditional leadership through strengthened governance systems, improved capacity-building programmes and sustained collaboration. We have also established an Investigative Committee to address disputes within the traditional leadership fraternity and to promote stability, unity and effective leadership within the institution.

Programme Director,

As we prepare for the upcoming Local Government Elections on 04 November 2026, we call upon traditional leaders to encourage active participation in voter registration and electoral processes. A strong democracy is built on active citizen participation. Traditional leaders remain influential voices within communities and are uniquely positioned to encourage our people, particularly the youth, to exercise their democratic right to vote and shape the future of local governance.

Deputy President, your presence here today demonstrates government's unwavering commitment to ensuring that traditional leadership remains a valued partner in building a capable, ethical and developmental state. We are confident that this engagement will deepen cooperation, strengthen partnerships and produce practical solutions that will improve the lives of our people.

Let this gathering mark a renewed commitment to working together to build prosperous, peaceful and sustainable communities. Let it affirm our shared belief that rural development is not a peripheral issue, but a central pillar of South Africa's growth and transformation.

On behalf of the people and government of Limpopo, I extend our warmest welcome to you, Deputy President and to all distinguished guests gathered here today.

I wish you fruitful deliberations and every success in your engagement.

I thank you.