

SPEECH BY PREMIER DR PHOPHI RAMATHUBA DURING THE OFFICIAL INAUGURATION
OF VHO THOVHELE TSHIMANGADZO NELTON MPHAPHULI AT HA-TSHIKONELO,
COLLINS CHABANE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, VHEMBE DISTRICT

18 July 2026

Programme Director,
Members of the Executive Council,
Executive Mayor of Vhembe District Municipality, Cllr Miyelani Chauke,
Mayor of Collins Chabane Local Municipality, Cllr Shadrack Maluleke,
Chairperson of the Limpopo House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders, Hosi Peni Ngove,
Vho Thovhele Gole Musiiwa Mphaphuli and all Traditional Leaders present,
The Royal Family of the Mphaphuli Dynasty,
Mlsanda, Vho Makhadzi and MaKhotsimunene,
Distinguished Guests,
Members of the Community,
Members of the Media,

Ndi Matsheloni, Avuxeni, Thobela, Good Morning, Goeie Môre.

It is both an honour and a profound privilege to stand before you on this historic occasion in the life of the Tshikonelo Madadzhe Mphaphuli dynasty. We gather on the fertile and beautiful land of the Singo people, Hà Tshikonelo, a place blessed with flowing rivers, towering peaks and generations of proud history. This is the home of one of the royal councils that rule over 13 villages in one of Limpopo's most respected traditional dynasties, whose story is woven into the rich cultural heritage of our province.

Today we honour the great leaders of Tshikonelo Madadzhe Mphaphuli Royal family, from Thovhele Stephanus Tshikonelo Madadzhe, Thovhele Nngwedzeni Alfred Madadzhe Mphaphuli who stood like unshakable mountains in defence of their people and their land. Their bravery protected these valleys, rivers and communities from those who sought to destroy them. Through their wisdom and courage, they preserved the customs, traditions and dignity of the Mphaphuli Dynasty for future generations.

Programme Director, today we celebrate the inauguration of our traditional leader. It is a celebration of our identity, our customs and the enduring institution of traditional leadership. It is a reminder that while generations may change, the values that bind us together, respect, unity, courage and service—remain constant.

The legacy we celebrate today flows from the distinguished bloodline of the Singo clan, renowned throughout history for its strength and resilience. We remember the great ancestor whose praises proclaim, "Gole u phaphula maswina"—the one who tore apart his enemies. It is from this remarkable history that the name Mphaphuli emerged, becoming a symbol of courage, unity and visionary leadership. Today, that rich legacy continues through a new generation.

Programme Director, we are gathered here as government to witness the official inauguration of Vho Thovhele Tshimangadzo Nelton Madadzhe Mphaphuli. We are delighted that this important milestone has been achieved through constructive engagement, mutual respect and cooperation between government and the royal family. This demonstrates that when we work together with sincerity and respect for our institutions, we can preserve our traditions while strengthening our democracy.

We know that Vho Thovhele was born into a family deeply rooted in traditional leadership. From an early age, he was nurtured in the values of humility, discipline, integrity and service. Leadership was never simply a title awaiting him; it was a responsibility for which he was prepared throughout his life.

We are equally encouraged by his commitment to education. As a holder of a Bachelor of Laws degree [LLB] and a practicing legal professional, he brings valuable knowledge and expertise to the throne. Modern traditional leadership requires leaders who can embrace both indigenous wisdom and contemporary governance. We are confident that Vho Thovhele possesses the qualities to provide leadership that honours tradition while embracing progress.

Vho Thovhele, today you ascend to one of the highest positions of responsibility within your community. Leadership is not about privilege or status; it is about service. Your people will look to you for guidance during difficult times, for wisdom during times of uncertainty and for hope when challenges appear overwhelming.

May you always lead with fairness and integrity. Be a leader who serves every member of your community equally, regardless of age, social standing or personal affiliation. Do not allow favouritism to divide your people. A great traditional leader belongs to everyone. Be accessible to your subjects, listen carefully to their concerns and govern with humility, compassion and justice. The strength of your leadership will not be measured by the authority you exercise, but by the trust and confidence your people place in you.

As government, we recognise the indispensable role that traditional leaders continue to play in strengthening social cohesion, promoting peace and advancing development in our rural communities. Traditional leadership remains a vital institution that connects government with communities and ensures that development responds to the needs and aspirations of our people.

We therefore encourage our traditional leaders to become champions of economic development in the area of jurisdiction. Our communal land is a priceless inheritance that must be protected for future generations. Rather than disposing of this valuable asset, let us use it strategically to attract investment, promote agriculture, develop tourism and create employment opportunities for our young people. Rural development must become the foundation upon which inclusive economic growth is built.

Our provincial government stands ready to work hand in hand with Vho Thovhele Tshimangadzo Nelton Madadzhe Mphaphuli and the Tshikonelo Madzadzhe Royal family and the Traditional Council in advancing development throughout this area. Together we can improve infrastructure, strengthen service delivery, attract investment and create sustainable opportunities that will improve the quality of life of our people.

To the people of Ha-Tshikonelo and the broader Mphaphuli Dynasty, I wish to make a humble appeal. Let us unite behind our newly inaugurated leader. Let us support him with loyalty, honesty and constructive advice. No leader succeeds alone. The prosperity of this kingdom will depend on the collective efforts of its people working together towards a common vision.

As we gather during Mandela Month, let us remember the values that our first democratic elected president Nelson Mandela lived for—humility, integrity, reconciliation and selfless service. These are the same values that should continue to guide all of us, particularly those entrusted with positions of leadership.

As I conclude, allow me to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Vho Thovhele Tshimangadzo Nelton Madadzhe Mphaphuli, the Royal Family and the entire Mphaphuli Traditional Council.

Aheee, Mphaphuli ya vhathu, yone nduhulu ya Ratsibi, Tsimbi ya kanda inwe I a vhinama, ene wa ha Nyathophi I no fhola nthu, fhasi I tshi fhisa.

Ndi nduhulu ya gunyukhuny, buka li sina mutshila, le la fhedza mutshila nga u thukhulela vhanwe. Ndi ene Mukhwambobvu, wa vhulungu vhutete, vhu no lunzhedzwa nga a na nzhele, a si na nzhele a fhaladza.

Ndi ene nduhulu ya Makwarela vemba la nwenda, li ne u kherulwa ra tangana.

Ndi vha ha Ranndongwana yo bva Vhulora, ya wana khulu dzi tshi nwa madi a mutsenene, nga swili ya longa shimba, khulu dza tuwa na dora.

Ndi vha ha tshilima mundondo, vha dzhia vhubva vha kumedza mundondo.

Ndi vha nowa dzi no lima davha, vhukukushe vhu tshi zwala mbeu, zwidula zwi tshi huvha mihuvho, zwitemahe zwi tshi lidza mifhululu.

Aheee Mphaphuli Aheeeeeee

Aaaa!