

WELCOME REMARKS BY LIMPOPO PREMIER DR PHOPHI RAMATHUBA DURING THE
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT MODEL OVERSIGHT MEETING HELD AT
BA-PHALABORWA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, MOPANI DISTRICT

10 JULY 2026

Programme Director,
Speaker of the Limpopo Legislature, Dr Makoma Makhurupetje,
Deputy Speaker of Legislature, Ms Tebogo Mamorobela,
Members of the Executive Council,
Executive Mayor of Mopani District Municipality, Cllr Pule Shayi,
Executive Mayor of Ba-Phalaborwa Local Municipality, Cllr Merriam Malatji,
Councillors,
Director-General, Mr Nape Nchabeleng,
Heads of Departments,
Municipal Managers,
Traditional Leaders,
Faith-Based Leaders,
Representatives of the Mining Sector,
Members of the Business Community,
Members of the Media,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

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

There is a saying that a nation is not built in conference rooms alone, but in villages where people wake up every morning with the hope that government will honour its promise to improve their lives. It is in those communities where children walk to school, where mothers wait for clean water to flow from their taps, where farmers depend on reliable roads to access markets, and where young people dream of meaningful opportunities. It is these hopes and aspirations that bring us together today.

It is therefore both an honour and a privilege to welcome you all to this important Executive Council District Development Model Oversight Meeting here in the beautiful Ba-Phalaborwa Local Municipality during Mandela Month - a period that reminds us that leadership is measured not by words, but by acts of service that restore dignity, inspire hope and transform lives.

Only two days ago, in nearby Lulekani, we had the honour of handing over a newly built home to the family of the conjoined twins. The case of the mother was a special case, not just because she gave birth to twins, but that she had to worry about having conjoined twins and the other three children at home. It was therefore important to treat this case as a special one, with the medical needs having been considered.

That house is more than bricks and mortar; it is a symbol of compassion, partnership and human dignity. It demonstrates what becomes possible when government,

business, civil society and ordinary citizens unite behind a common purpose. It is a living example of our commitment to building "A Limpopo That Works For All."

Programme Director,

As public representatives, administrators and development partners, we must never lose sight of why we are here. We have been entrusted with the sacred responsibility of serving our people with humility, integrity and dedication. Every decision we take must improve lives, restore dignity and strengthen public confidence in government.

This meeting is therefore not another administrative exercise. It is a platform for accountability, problem-solving and decisive action. It calls upon all of us to move beyond identifying challenges towards implementing practical and measurable solutions that will make a real difference in the daily lives of our communities.

The District Development Model remains one of the most significant governance reforms introduced by our democratic government. It recognises that the challenges facing our communities cannot be resolved in isolation by individual departments or spheres of government. Instead, it compels us to work together under the guiding principle of "One Plan, One Budget and One Voice" to deliver integrated, coordinated and people-centred development.

Since the beginning of the 7th Administration, the Executive Council has undertaken District Development Model oversight visits across Capricorn, Vhembe and Waterberg Districts. Today, we continue that journey here in Mopani District - not merely to monitor progress, but to evaluate whether our commitments are translating into visible improvements in the lives of our people.

Programme Director,

Throughout this week, Members of the Executive Council have been on the ground leading departmental oversight teams across Ba-Phalaborwa Local Municipality and to help rebuild the municipality after the devastating natural disasters in January and March 2026 that destroyed most of the infrastructure, including water infrastructure. They have visited roads, clinics, schools, agricultural projects, water infrastructure, community facilities and other service delivery sites.

These visits were undertaken to ensure that government remains visible and accessible to the people, listens directly to their concerns, identifies implementation bottlenecks and responds decisively and with urgency where intervention is required. Our presence on the ground reflects our commitment to restoring livelihoods, rebuilding communities and accelerating service delivery.

Our communities have spoken clearly. They expect reliable water supply, quality roads, stable electricity, efficient municipalities, ethical leadership, employment opportunities and a government that delivers with consistency. Their expectations are reasonable because these are the fundamental services that every resident deserves.

Programme Director,

Among the pressing challenges confronting Ba-Phalaborwa Local Municipality are water security, deteriorating road infrastructure and electricity supply. These are not merely infrastructure concerns; they are fundamental drivers of economic growth, investment, public health and improved quality of life.

For this reason, we believe that the municipality should urgently establish a dedicated Multi-Stakeholder Service Delivery War Room that brings together government departments, municipalities, water entities, engineers, the mining sector and other strategic partners to coordinate interventions, eliminate duplication and accelerate service delivery.

Equally important is strengthening collaboration with the mining companies operating within this municipality. These companies derive value from the natural resources of this area and must continue to play an active developmental role in improving the living conditions of surrounding communities through meaningful investment, infrastructure development, skills development and sustainable community partnerships.

Phalaborwa has long been a household name and has proudly lived by the saying that it is "better than Borwa (Gauteng)." It is now time to restore that reputation by rebuilding the tourism strength that the R71 corridor represents. We must once again position Phalaborwa as the land of two summers, a destination renowned for its warm climate, rich natural heritage and unique attractions that draw visitors from across the country and beyond.

By revitalising tourism, investing in our infrastructure and promoting our local attractions, we will bring tourists back in their numbers, stimulate economic growth, create jobs and rebuild the pride and prosperity of Ba-Phalaborwa.

Programme Director,

While we acknowledge that significant challenges remain, we are equally encouraged by the progress already achieved. The infrastructure interventions currently underway demonstrate government's determination to improve mobility, stimulate economic activity and restore public confidence in our institutions.

However, progress must now be accelerated. Our people deserve municipalities that are stable, well-governed and capable of delivering services efficiently. The era of instability, unnecessary internal conflicts and poor governance must become a thing of the past. Communities deserve ethical, disciplined and accessible leaders who place the interests of the people above all else.

We are equally encouraged by the active participation of councilors, traditional leaders and community stakeholders throughout this Service Delivery Week. Traditional leaders continue to play a vital role in promoting social cohesion, community mobilisation,

conflict resolution and sustainable development. Their partnership with government remains indispensable, and together we must continue strengthening these collaborative relationships for the benefit of our communities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we conclude this Service Delivery Week, let us remember that history will not judge us by the number of meetings we convened, but by the lives we have changed. It will judge us by whether families received clean water, whether roads became safer, whether municipalities became functional, whether young people found opportunities, and whether our communities experienced a better quality of life because we chose action over complacency.

May this Executive Council District Development Model Oversight Meeting strengthen our collective resolve to govern with urgency, integrity and compassion. Let us leave this gathering with practical resolutions, stronger partnerships and renewed determination to ensure that no village, no household and no community is left behind.

Together, through cooperation, accountability and decisive leadership, we will continue building A Limpopo That Works For All.

I thank you.