



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**SPEECH ON BEHALF OF PREMIER OF LIMPOPO PROVINCE BY MEC
FLORENCE RADZILANI AT THE PROVINCIAL LAUNCH OF WOMEN'S
MONTH 2026**

Lebowakgomo Civic Centre, Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality, Capricorn District

05 August 2026

Programme Director,

MECs,

Executive Mayor of Capricorn District

Mayor of Lepelle-Nkumpi,

Speaker of Council, Councillors,

Leaders of the Progressive Women's Movement,

Traditional Leaders,

Religious Leaders,

Representatives from business, labour, NPOs and CBOs,

The women of Limpopo gathered here today,

Members of the media,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Dumelang! Ndi Matsheloni, Avuxeni, Good morning, Basadi ba Limpopo!**

Today we gather here in Lebowakgomo, in the heart of Lepelle-Nkumpi, to officially launch Women's Month 2026 activities. We chose this place because real transformation happens where the people are. It happens in our villages, in our townships and in our rural communities.

And to the 500 women gathered here today: you are not just an audience. You are the engine of this province.

This year, we mark a very special moment in our history. On 09 August 2026, South Africa will commemorate 70 years since the historic Women's March of 1956. On that day, more than 20 000 women marched to the Union Buildings in Pretoria to protest pass laws and the Urban Areas Act. They stood up when it was dangerous to stand up. They spoke when many wanted them silent. They marched because they knew that freedom without women is not true freedom.

That march gave us a message that still speaks to us today: "Wathint' Abafazi, Wathint' Imbokodo." You strike a woman, you strike a rock.

A rock does not break easily. A rock stands firm against wind, against rain, against pressure. That is the story of South African women. That is the story of Limpopo women. That is the story of the women of Capricorn District.

We honour the women who came before us - women like Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Rahima Moosa and Sophia Williams-De Bruyn. They showed the country that women are not followers in the struggle for justice. Women are leaders of the struggle.

And here in Limpopo, we must also remember our own daughters of courage — women who fought in homes, in schools, in communities, in churches and in movements to make sure that women are no longer treated as second-class citizens. We remember the many unnamed women of Capricorn, of Sekhukhune, of Vhembe, of Mopani and Waterberg - women who kept families together in the hardest times, who educated children with little money, who organised communities, who mobilised against oppression and who made sure that the dream of freedom did not die.

We remember the women of Lebowakgomo, Seshego, Mankweng, Jane Furse, Giyani, Malamulele, Modimolle, Bela-Bela, Musina and Tzaneen - women who have carried this province on their backs, often quietly, but always powerfully.

Today we celebrate them not as symbols of the past, but as builders of the future.

The theme for this year, ***Empowered Women Empower the Nation***, is not just a slogan. It is a serious statement. It tells us that when women are given power, skills, protection and opportunity, the whole country becomes stronger.

But Basadi, while we celebrate, we must also be honest.

Thirty years into our democracy, we must still ask: have we delivered equal rights and equal opportunities?

The answer is: we have made progress, but we are not there yet.

We still face three major enemies. **First: Poverty.** Too many women are still the face of poverty. In rural areas, especially, women continue to carry the burden of unemployment, food insecurity, unpaid care work and limited access to economic opportunity.

Second: Unemployment. Women are still under-represented in the economy, in procurement, in ownership, and in senior management. Too many women have the talent, the education and the determination, but not enough access to capital, markets or opportunity.

Third: Gender-Based Violence. Gender-based violence remains our second pandemic. No woman should live in fear in her own home, in her community, or on her way to work, church, school or the clinic. No woman should be assaulted, silenced or buried because of the violence of another human being.

We cannot celebrate freedom while women are still unsafe.

We cannot celebrate democracy while women are still poor.

We cannot celebrate equality while women are still excluded.

That is why government must move from words to action.

As the Office of the Premier and as a provincial government, we are doing this work in practical ways.

Through our Township and Rural Economy Strateg, we have set a target that 40% of government procurement must go to women-owned businesses. This is not a wish. It is a commitment. Treasury will continue to monitor this.

We are also rolling out skills development and market access programmes for women-owned SMMEs in agriculture, tourism and manufacturing, including right here in Lepelle-Nkumpi and the wider Capricorn District.

We want women to be suppliers, producers, contractors, innovators and employers - not only beneficiaries.

We have established the Provincial GBVF Technical Working Group. We are working with SAPS, Social Development, traditional leaders and civil society to ensure that every municipality has a functional victim support system.

We have also established GBVF Rapid Response Teams in all five districts. The message is simple: when a woman cries out for help, government must move with urgency.

And soon, our GBVF Dashboard will go live to track cases, monitor response times and ensure that no perpetrator hides in the shadows of delay and silence.

No more hiding of perpetrators.

No more endless waiting.

No more failure to act.

We are not yet where we need to be on 50% women representation in Senior Management Service. That is why we have directed that Employment Equity must be a standing item in EXCO and in every HoD performance agreement.

Without excuses. Without delays. Without pretending we do not know the gap.

Women must be present in the rooms where decisions are made. Women must sit at the table where budgets are decided. Women must help shape the future of this province.

The Office of the Premier has also advertised the Sustainable Livelihoods Project, which focuses on women, youth and persons with disabilities. This is part of our broader effort to open opportunities where they have been closed for too long.

Our mobile health teams and clinics continue to provide free services across all five districts, especially for historically disadvantaged communities.

These are not just programmes on paper. They are interventions designed to make life better, safer and more dignified.

Basadi ba Limpopo, women's month is not only about speeches and events. It is about empowerment. It is about changing lives.

It is about making sure that women are protected, employed, respected and heard 365 days a year.

Government cannot do this alone. We need the Progressive Women's Movement, we need traditional leaders, religious leaders, community structures, business, labour, NGOs and CBOs. We need all of us to work together.

To the women here today, I say: go back to your communities and continue the work of upliftment.

Share information about business opportunities.

Encourage one another to register for skills development.

Speak up against abuse.

Report GBV when it happens.

Support young girls who are trying to find their place in the world.

And never stop demanding your rightful place in the economy and in leadership.

As we launch Women's Month today, let us remember that this work is not only for August. It is for every day of the year. **This month alone we shall have over 72 activities across all districts** that are aimed at empowering women, allowing interactions, opening opportunities as well as cementing the vision that as the provincial government we carry.

Let us commit ourselves as government, municipalities, civil society and communities to reducing poverty, expanding women's economic empowerment, and ending gender-based violence in our communities.

Our theme this year says it clearly: ***Empowered Women Empower the Nation.***

And I want to say it again in a way that captures the spirit of our people:

When women rise, families rise.

When women are safe, communities are stronger.

When women lead, the nation moves forward.

The future of Limpopo is female. And that future starts with all of us.

Ke a leboga. I thank you, Basadi.