

STATEMENT BY THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO, DR PHOPHI RAMATHUBA, FOLLOWING THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 19 AUGUST 2026

21 August 2026

The Limpopo Executive Council (EXCO) met on 19 August 2026, to deliberate on the strategic direction of our province, with a firm focus on governance, fiscal discipline and the accelerated provision of services to our people. Our discussions were underpinned by the principle that transparency and accountability are the bedrock of our administration.

1. Audit Outcomes and Institutional Integrity

The Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA) 2025-26 audit report reveals a province on a path of steady improvement. We are proud that six (6) departments (Office of the Premier, Provincial Treasury, Limpopo Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, Department Transport and Community Safety, Sport, Arts and Culture and Agriculture and Rural Development) plus one (1) entity (Limpopo Tourism Agency) have achieved "clean audit" outcomes, an increase from six in the previous year. We specifically recognise the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for their transition to a clean audit as well as Roads Agency Limpopo from qualified to unqualified through strengthened internal controls. Equally, the Departments of Education, Health and Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure and Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs with high budgets have maintained their unqualified audit opinions, paving way for even more clean audits in the next financial year.

However, where we regress, we act. The Executive Council noted with concern the decline in audit outcomes for the Department of Social Development and Limpopo Connexion. In response, EXCO has directed the Provincial Treasury to conduct a comprehensive forensic investigation into transfer payments made to non-profit organisations (NPOs) during the 2025-26 financial year.

We have instituted measures to deploy professional accountants to assist NPOs in ensuring strict compliance and proper accounting of public funds. We will institute litigation where non-compliance is identified.

We are also addressing 14 identified Material Irregularities (MIs) totalling R149.6 million and I am encouraged that our Accounting Officers are already proactively working to recover funds and strengthen controls.

2. Intervention in Thabazimbi Local Municipality

The Executive Council received a forensic report regarding the Thabazimbi Local Municipality. This follows an earlier visit in 2025 wherein we were concerned about that municipality's handling of various matters, including revenue collection. The Executive Council has formally endorsed the findings of the forensic investigation report. We have

directed that this report be tabled before the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) and the Municipal Council of Thabazimbi. The municipality is now mandated to develop a detailed implementation plan and report quarterly to the relevant MECs, ensuring that maladministration is rooted out and accountability is upheld.

3. Water and Sanitation: A Differentiated Approach

Recognising that a "one size fits all" approach to water challenges is ineffective, EXCO has approved the Limpopo Differentiated Water and Sanitation Strategy 2026. This strategy allows for targeted interventions based on the unique needs of our districts. Having seen the success of the war room in the City of Polokwane, to a greater extent in Mopani and Vhembe Districts, we shall set our eyes on Sekhukhune District Municipality in the next few months. Consequently, we are intensifying our dedicated support to the district to ensure sustainable supply. Furthermore, we are establishing a Provincial Water Council to oversee the implementation of these critical infrastructure projects.

4. Disaster Management and Community Support

We have approved the Limpopo Provincial Disaster Management Framework 2026 to enhance our readiness. In the immediate term, the EXCO has resolved to write to the Minister of Human Settlements to secure urgent intervention for the families displaced by the February 2026 floods in Tshakhuma, Mbaula and other areas ensuring they receive the Temporary Residential Units (TRUs) they require.

Additionally, we directed the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) on the Relocation of Sekhukhune District Offices to engage the Pedi Mamone Traditional Community formally to provide them with the necessary updates and clarity on the relocation process.

5. Economic Growth and Investment

Limpopo remains a prime investment destination. We have endorsed the Limpopo Tourism Growth Strategy 2026–2030 and are preparing to host the 8th Annual Africa Tourism Leadership Conference in Polokwane from 02–04 September 2026.

Furthermore, we are finalizing the concept for our 6th Limpopo Investment Conference, scheduled for 15 October 2026. We are engaging partners to ensure that these platforms yield tangible economic dividends for our citizens.

6. Administrative Excellence

Finally, to improve how we engage with our citizens, EXCO has endorsed the implementation of the revised Government Communication Policy 2026. This will ensure that our communication is professional, coherent and accessible.

We shall take this opportunity to also welcome the appointment of the Provincial Commissioner Lt.General Jan Scheepers. We appreciate the energy and the reception that his appointment has received and the work that he continues to do. Just this morning he gave us a report that at about 22:00 DPCI with task force conducted a raid on a farm just outside Musina, Limpopo. They discovered a drug lab to the value of R600 000.00 and arrested 5 suspects, 2 Mexicans, 2 Zimbabweans and 1 Malawian citizens. The drug cartel was renting the farm from the owner. Investigation is continuing and update will be made.

In conclusion, our infrastructure reports indicate that we have successfully accelerated the transition of approximately 200 projects into construction, with another 450 in the pipeline. We are committed to maintaining this momentum to improve the lived realities of all the people of Limpopo.

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